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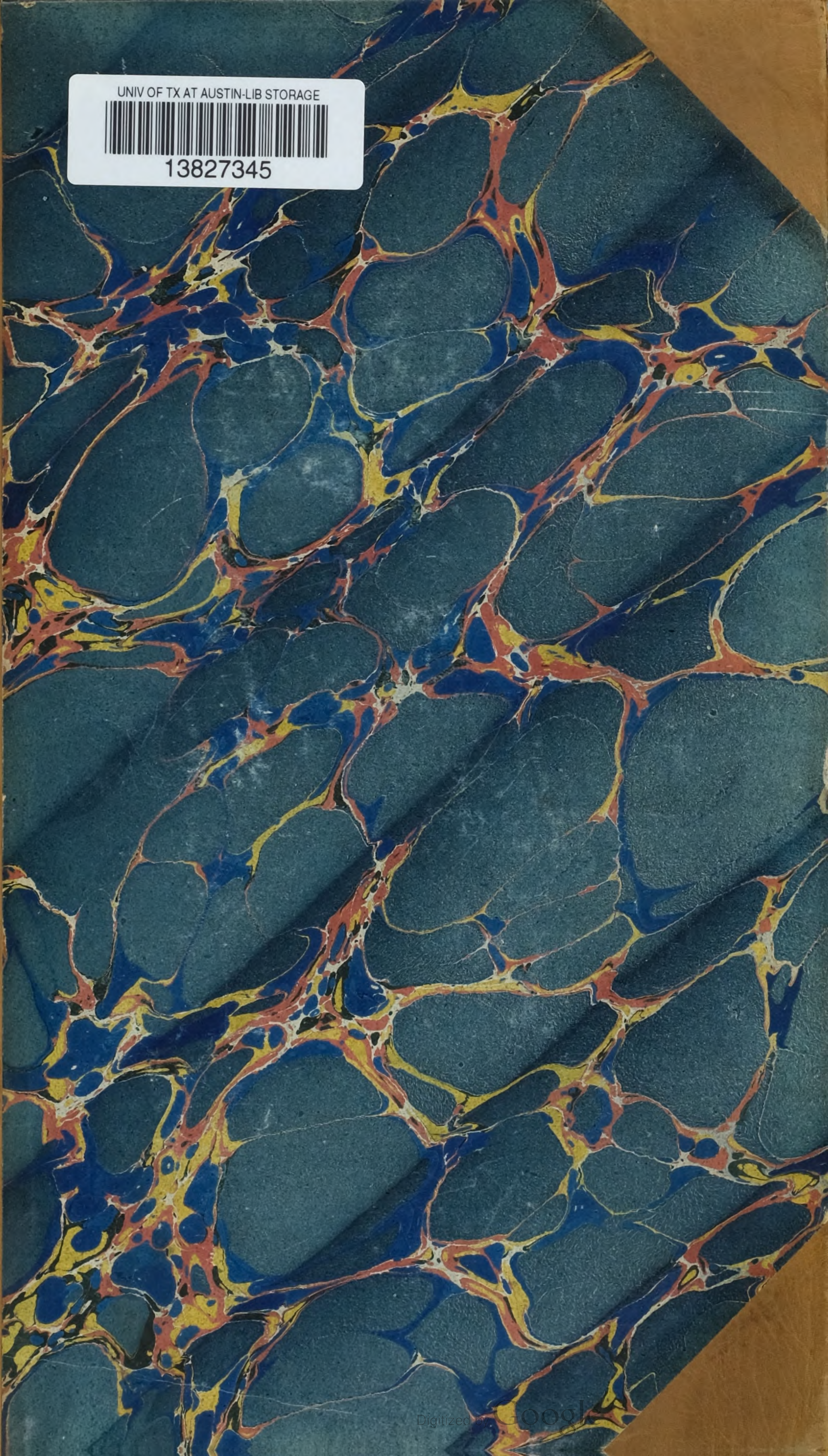

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THE CAPTAIN MORATTI'S LAST AFFAIR.

By S. LEVETT YEATS, Author of 'The Honour of Savelli.'

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.—'ARCADES AMBO.'

'Halt!' The word, which seemed to come from nowhere, rang out into the crisp winter moonlight so sharply, so suddenly, so absolutely without warning, that the Cavaliere Michele di Lippo, who was ambling comfortably along, reined in his horse with a jerk; and with a start, looked into the night. He had not to fret his curiosity above a moment, for a figure gliding out from the black shadows of the pines, fencing in each side of the lonely road, stepped full into the white band of light stretching between the darkness on either hand, and stood in front of the horse. As the two faced each other, it was not the fact that there was a man in his path that made the rider keep a restraining hand on his bridle. It was the persuasive force, the voiceless command, in the round muzzle of an arquebuss pointed at his heart, and along the barrel of which Di Lippo could see the glint of the moonlight, a thin bright streak ending in the wicked blinking star of the lighted fuse. The cavaliere took in the position at a glance, and being a man of resolution, hurriedly cast up his chances of escape by spurring his horse and suddenly riding down the thief. In a flash the thought came and was dismissed. It was impossible; for the night-hawk had taken his stand at a distance of about six feet off, space enough to enable him to blow his quarry's heart out well before the end of any sudden rush to disarm him. The mind moves like lightning in matters of this kind, and Di Lippo surrendered without condition. Though his heart was burning within him, he was outwardly cool and collected. He had yielded to force he could not resist. Could he have seen ever so small a chance, the positions might have been reversed. As it was, Messer the bandit might still have to look to himself, and his voice was icy as the night as he said: 'Well! I have halted. What more? It is chill, and I care not to be kept waiting.'

The robber was not without humour, and a line of teeth showed for an instant behind the burning match of the weapon he held steadily before him. He did not, however, waste words. 'Throw down your purse.'

The cavaliere hesitated. Ducats were scarce with him, but the bandit had a short patience. 'Diavolo! Don't you hear, signore?'

It was useless to resist. The fingers of the cavaliere fumbled under his cloak, and a fat purse fell squab into the snow, where it lay, a dark spot in the whiteness around, for all the world like a sleeping toad. The bandit chuckled as he heard the plump thud of the purse, and Di Lippo's muttered curse was lost in the sharp order: 'Get off the horse.'

'But'——

'I am in a hurry, signore.' The robber blew on the match of his arquebuss, and the match in its glow cast a momentary light on his face, showing the outlines of high aquiline features, and the black curve of a pair of long moustaches.

'Maledetto!' and the disgusted cavaliere dismounted, the scabbard of his useless sword striking with a clink against the stirrup iron, as he unwillingly swung from the saddle and stood in the snow—a tall figure, lean and gaunt.

As he did this, the bandit stepped back a pace, so as to give him the road. 'Your excel-

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lency,' he said mockingly, 'is now free to pass—on foot. A walk will doubtless remove the chill your excellency finds so unpleasant.'

But Di Lippo made no advance. In fact, as his feet touched the snow, he recovered the composure he had so nearly lost, and saw his way to gain some advantage from defeat. It struck him that here was the very man he wanted for an affair of the utmost importance. Indeed, it was for just such an instrument that he had been racking his brains, as he rode on that winter night through the Gonfolina defile, which separates the middle and the lower valleys of the Arno. And now—a hard turn—and he had found his man. True, an expensive find; but cheap if all turned out well—that is, well from Di Lippo's point of view. This thing the cavaliere wanted done he could not take into his own hands. Not from fear—it was no question of that; but because it was not convenient; and Michele di Lippo never gave himself any inconvenience, although it was sometimes thrust upon him in an unpleasant manner by others. If he could but induce the man before him to undertake the task, what might not be? But the knight of the road was evidently very impatient.

'Blood of a king!' he swore, 'are you going, signore? Think you I am to stand here all night?'

'Certainly not,' answered Di Lippo in his even voice, 'nor am I. But to come to the point. I want a little business managed, and will pay for it. You appear to be a man of courage—will you undertake the matter?'

'Cospetto! But you are a cool hand! Who are you?'

'Is it necessary to know? I offer a hundred crowns, fifty to be paid to you if you agree, and fifty on the completion of the affair.'

'A matter of the dagger?'

'That is for you to decide.'

The bandit almost saw the snarl on Di Lippo's lips as he dropped out slowly: 'You are too cautious, my friend—you think to the skin. The rack will come whether you do my business or not.' The words were not exactly calculated to soothe, and called up an unpleasant vision before the robber's eyes. A sudden access of wrath shook him. 'Begone, signore!' he burst out, 'lest my patience exhausts itself, and I give you a bed in the snow. Why I have spared your life, I know not. Begone; warm yourself with a walk'——

'I will pay a hundred crowns,' interrupted Di Lippo.

'A hundred devils—begone!'

'As you please. Remember, it is a hundred crowns, and, on the faith of a noble, I say nothing about to-night. Where can I find you, in case you change your mind? A hundred crowns is a comfortable sum of money, mind you.'

There was no excitement about Di Lippo. He spoke slowly and distinctly. His cool voice neither rose nor dropped, but he spoke in a steady, chill monotone. A hundred crowns *was* a comfortable sum of money. It was a sum not to be despised. For a tithe of that—nay, for two pistoles—the Captain Guido Moratti would have risked his life twice over, things had come to such a pass with him. Highway robbery was not exactly his line, although sometimes, as on this occasion, he had been driven to it by the straits of the times. But suppose this offer was a blind? Suppose the man before him merely wanted to know where to get at him, to hand him over to the tender mercies of the thumbscrew and the rack? On the other hand, the man might be in earnest—and a hundred crowns! He hesitated. 'A—hun—dred—crowns.'

The cavaliere repeated these words, and there was a silence. Finally, the bandit spoke.

'I frankly confess, signore, that stealing purses, even as I have done to-day, is not my way; but a man must live. If you mean what you say, there must be no half-confidences. Tell me who you are, and I will tell you where to find me.'

'I am the Cavaliere Michele di Lippo of Castel Lippo on the Greve.'

'Where is Castel Lippo?'

'At the junction of the Arno and the Greve—on the left bank.'

'Very well. In a week you will hear from me again.'

'It is enough. You will allow me to ransom the horse. I will send you the sum. On my word of honour, I have nothing to pay it at once.'

'The signore's word of honour is doubtless very white. But a can in the hand is a can in the hand, and I need a horse.—Good-night!'

'Good-night! But a can in the hand is not always wine to the lips, though a hundred crowns is ever a hundred crowns;' and saying this, Di Lippo drew his cloak over the lower part of his face, and turned sharply into the darkness to the right without so much as giving a look behind him. His horse would have followed; but quick as thought, Moratti's hand was on the trailing reins, and holding them firmly, he stooped and picked up the purse, poising it at arm's-length in front of him.

'Silver,' he muttered, as his fingers felt the coins through the soft leather—'thirty crowns at the most, perhaps an odd gold piece or so—and now to be off. *Hola!* steady!' and mounting the horse, he turned his head round, still talking to himself: 'I am in luck. Cheese falls on my macaroni—thirty broad pieces and a horse, and a hundred crowns more in prospect. Captain Guido Moratti, the devil smiles on you—you will end a Count. *Animo!*' He touched the horse with his heels, and went forward at a smart gallop; and as he galloped, he threw his head back and laughed loudly and mirthlessly into the night.

In the meantime it was with a sore heart that the cavaliere made his way through the forest to the banks of the Arno, and then plodded along the river-side, through the wood, by a track scarcely discernible to any but one who had seen it many times. On his right hand the river hummed drearily; on his left, the trees sighed in the night-wind; and before him the narrow track wound, now up, then down, now twisting amongst the pines in darkness, then stretching in front, straight as a plumb-line. It was gall to Di Lippo to think of the loss of the crowns and the good horse; it was bitterness to trudge it in the cold along the weary path that led to the ferry across the Arno, which he would have to cross before reaching his own home; and he swore deeply, under the muffling of his cloak, as he pressed on at his roundest pace. He soon covered the two miles that lay between him and the ferry; but it was past midnight ere he did this, and reaching the ferryman's hut, battered at the door with the hilt of his sword. Eventually he aroused the ferryman, who came forth grumbling. Had it been any one else, honest Giuseppe would have told him to go hang before he would have risen from his warm bed; but the Cavaliere Michele was a noble, and, although poor, had a lance or two, and Castel Lippo, which bore an ill name, was only a mangonel shot from the opposite bank. So Giuseppe punted his excellency across; and his excellency vented his spleen with a curse at everything in general, and the bandit in particular, as he stepped ashore and hurried to his dwelling. It was a steep climb that led up by a bridle-path to his half-ruined tower, and Di Lippo stood at the postern and whistled on his silver whistle, and knocked for many a time, before he heard the chains clanking and the bar put back. At last the door opened, and a figure stood before him, a lantern in one hand.

'St John! But it is your worship! We did not expect you until sunrise. And the horse, excellency?'

'Stand aside, fool. I have been robbed, that is all. Yes—let the matter drop; and light me up quick. Will you gape all night there?'

The porter, shutting the gate hastily, turned, and walking before his master, led him across the courtyard. Even by the moonlight, it could be seen that the flagstones were old and worn with age. In many places they had come apart, and with the spring, sprouts of green grass and white serpyllum would shoot up from the cracks. At present, these fissures were choked with snow. Entering the tower by an arched door at the end of the courtyard, they ascended a winding stair, which led into a large but only partially furnished room. Here the man lit two candles, and Di Lippo dropping his cloak, sank down into a chair, saying: 'Make up a fire, will you—and bring me some wine; after that, you may go.'

The man threw a log or two into the fireplace, where there were already the remains of a fire, and the pine-wood soon blazed up cheerfully. Then he placed a flask of Orvieto and a glass at his master's elbow, and wishing him good-night, left him.

Michele di Lippo poured himself out a full measure and drained it at a draught. Drawing his chair close to the blazing wood, he stretched out his feet, cased in long boots of Spanish leather, and stared into the flames. He sat thus for an hour or so without motion. The candles burned out, and the fire alone lit the room, casting strange shadows on the moth-eaten tapestry of the hangings, alternately lighting and leaving in darkness the corners of the room, and throwing its fitful glow on the pallid features of the brooding man, who sat as if cut out of stone. At last the cavaliere moved, but it was only to fling another log on the flames. Then he resumed his former attitude, and watched the fire. As he looked, he saw a picture. He saw wide lands, lands rich with olive and vine, that climbed the green hills between which the Aulella babbles. He saw the gray towers of the castle of Pieve. Above the donjon, a broad flag flapped lazily in the air, and the blazon on it—three wasps on a green field—was his own. He was no longer the ruined noble, confined to his few acres, living like a goat amongst the rocks of the Greve; but my lord count, ruffling it again in Rome, and calling the mains with Riario, as in the good old times ten years ago. Diavolo! But those were times when the Borgia was Pope! What nights those were in the Torre Borgia! He had one of Giulia Bella's gloves still, and there were dark stains on its whiteness—stains that were red once with the blood of Monreale, who wore it over his heart the day he ran him through on the Ripetta. Basta! *That* was twelve years ago! Twelve years! Twelve hundred years it seemed. And he was forty now. Still young enough to run another man through, however. Cospetto! If the bravo would only undertake the job, everything might be his! He would live again—or perhaps! And another picture came before the dreamer. It had much to do with death—a bell was tolling dismally, and a chained man was walking to his end, with a priest muttering prayers into his ears. In the background was a gallows, and a sea of heads, an endless swaying crowd of heads, with faces that looked on the man with hate, and tongues that jeered and shouted curses at him. And the voices of the crowd seemed to merge into one tremendous roar of hatred as the condemned wretch ascended the steps of the platform on which he was to find a disgraceful death.

Michele di Lippo rose suddenly with a shiver and an oath: 'Maledetto! I must sleep. It touches the morning, and I have been dreaming too long.'

OUR PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF WHEAT.

By R. Hedger Wallace,
Author of *Agriculture* (W. & R. Chambers, Limited).

As every intelligent man now acknowledges, the agricultural depression in the United Kingdom is mainly due to the heavy fall in the prices of farm products, caused by the enormous importation of food products from other countries. Every year we now import into this country from abroad grain to the value of fifty millions sterling; and live cattle, sheep, and pigs to the value of thirty millions. The subject is so wide that we shall restrict ourselves to the importation, home production, and consumption of wheat, and ask non-agricultural readers to favour us with their attention while we put some facts before them which merit consideration.

That the price of home-grown wheat has fallen, and fallen enormously, there can be little doubt. In 1860 the average *Gazette* price for home-grown wheat was 55s. 3d. per quarter; in 1870 it was 54s. 2d.; in 1880, 43s. 11d.; and in 1890, 35s. 5d. To bring this fall in price down to a later date, we find, from the weekly statements published by the Board of Agriculture under the Corn Returns Act of 1882, that the average price for home-grown wheat for the week ending 16th March 1895 was 19s. 9d. For the corresponding week in 1891 it was 34s. 5d.; in 1892, 33s.; in 1893, 24s. 9d.; and in 1894, 24s. 3d. This steady fall in price has lessened the area under wheat, as a natural sequence. The following figures will show at a glance how the area has been restricted, as also the yield per acre; the years taken being fairly representative of the periods:

Years.	Acres.	Bushels per Acre.
1856	4,213,651	27½
1866	3,649,548	25½
1876	3,114,555	25⅜
1886	2,355,451	29¾
1894	1,980,228	30⅗

Owing to fall in prices, the area under wheat has fallen in forty years from four million acres to about two million; but the yield per acre has been increased, showing the ability and skill of the British farmer. 'There can, indeed, be no doubt,' write Messrs Lawes & Gilbert in 1892, 'that the eight years commencing with 1884 and ending with 1891 gave a higher average yield per acre than any equal period of the forty years.' As prices have fallen, the British farmer has reduced his area; but he has increased his return of produce per acre—thus showing both his common-sense and his capabilities.

Our next point is to look at the quantities of home-grown and imported wheat available for consumption, and their relative proportions. From an article by Messrs Lawes & Gilbert in the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society*, we take the following figures, showing the amount of wheat produced at home, as compared with the amount imported, in periods of eight years:

	Home Produce.	Imports.
1852-53 to 1859-60	13,403,310	4,820,246
1860-61 to 1867-68	12,467,499	8,309,783
1868-69 to 1875-76	11,834,879	10,894,622
1876-77 to 1883-84	8,922,986	16,306,191
1884-85 to 1891-92	8,706,974	18,657,281

These figures show that, forty years ago, the consumer looked to the British farmer to feed him with home-grown produce; to-day, he looks to the foreigner for the supply of his wants. Setting aside patriotic questions, can such an absolute dependence on imports be justified on economic grounds? Our population in 1852 was about twenty-seven and a half millions, and in 1892 it was thirty-eight millions, an increase of about thirty-eight per cent.; but our imports have increased at a rate out of all proportion to the increase in population, and our home production does not even remain stationary, but steadily declines. In 1855-56 the amount raised at home was 73·7 per cent. of the total, the remaining 26·3 per cent. being imported; in 1873-74 the respective figures were 44·8 and 55·2; in 1891-92 they were 26·8 and 73·2. Thirty-five years therefore produced a complete inversion of the proportions.

Forty years ago, seventy-three per cent. of the wheat used was home-grown; now seventy-three per cent. of the consumption is imported. What will happen should imports suddenly cease? This is a question consumers may well think over. The British farmer is not a philanthropist; he only grows such produce as will yield him a decent profit. That he is a capable man is shown by his increasing the yield per acre; and that he is not a fool is clear by his reducing his area under arable, and especially wheat cultivation, as far as is consistent with practical farm economy. The question is not, 'Can he supply the wheat wanted?' Forty years ago, he supplied from seventy to seventy-five per cent. of the demand; since then, he has put two million acres out of cultivation, and increased his return on the balance. If required, he can resume his old acreage; and with his higher yield, resume his old position when he finds it to his advantage to do so.

The question is one for the consumer to consider, rather than the farmer; and the following figures may bring it home to him. During the past forty years the average consumption of wheat per head of the population has been 5·65 bushels; and in 1891-92, it was 6·57 bushels. Taking the figures for 1891-92, we find that of the total amount required per head, 1·76 bushels were home-grown, while 4·81 bushels were imported—or, as we saw before, about seventy-three per cent. of the consumption of wheat per head within the year is from imports. The consumer requires in round figures to be supplied with six bushels of wheat in a year, and he obtains four and two-fifth bushels from foreign sources, and one and three-fifth bushels from the British farmer. To meet the demand on him, the farmer sows enough wheat to cover the twenty-seven per cent. of the consumption he is expected to supply; and if prices go down further, he will be content to supply less than this percentage, and let the consumer look elsewhere. Let us look at this question in a practical manner. For the season 1895 the area sown under wheat will be capable of yielding when harvested twenty-seven per cent. of the annual wheat consumption—that is, the one and three-fifth bushels per head per annum demanded from the British grower by the consumer. Should some unforeseen disaster stop the imports of wheat from *all sources*—say from May 1895—where is the consumer to obtain the balance of four and two-fifth bushels? We consume about thirty-one million quarters of wheat, and this season we shall have an area under wheat which in August will yield us about eight million quarters. Till this is harvested, we shall have to depend on the stock of wheat and flour we may have in hand; and let us suppose that we are fortunate enough to have a six months' stock in hand—say, fifteen million quarters. This would carry us from May to October; and the yield from the harvest would carry us on perhaps to February 1896. From September 1895 to March 1896 we should doubtless make every effort so to increase our area under cultivation as to supply the consumption of the country; and we are quite capable of doing it; but this crop could not be harvested, say, before July 1896. From February to July, where is the consumer to draw his supplies from? Of course it will be admitted that if this stoppage of imports took place at the close of our harvest season, we would be better able to cope with the difficulty, provided we had a good stock in hand. Again, it will be said that it is *impossible* our imports could be suddenly stopped. But it should be remembered, as Lord Beaconsfield said, that it is the unexpected that always happens, and history teaches us that men like Napoleon I. do not know what the term 'impossible' means.

The figures above given are based on tables in an article by Messrs Lawes & Gilbert, which we owe to the kindness of the Secretary of the Royal Agricultural Society. For the table from which are taken the following figures, further illustrating the same significant facts, and showing the same melancholy decline of home supplies, we are indebted to the Secretary of the Board of Agriculture. In 1890, 40,710,773 cwt. of wheat were grown at home, while 82,381,591 cwt. of wheat and wheat flour were imported from abroad; in 1891, the home produce was 40,040,732 cwt., the import 89,539,355 cwt.; in 1892, 32,558,220 cwt. against 95,604,589; in 1893, 27,274,739 cwt. against 93,806,666; and in 1894, 32,520,204 cwt. against 96,710,195.

We import about seventy-five per cent. of our total requirements, the home producer supplying the balance. The wonder is that he even does this. In 1895 he is getting 19s. 9d., when ten years ago he was getting 33s. 2d. for his wheat. The British consumer, besides drawing three-fourths of his supplies from foreign sources, is also now prepared apparently to pay a higher price for it than for home-grown wheat, for in 1860-68 the average *Gazette* price of home-grown wheat was, per quarter, 52s. 2d., while that of the imported wheat, according to the Trade and Navigation Returns, was 49s. 6d. In 1869-76 the home-grown brought 52s., the imported 49s. But in 1877-84 the tables were turned; the home-grown fetching 45s. 7d., while the imported fetched 46s. 2d.; and in 1885-92 this difference was still greater in favour of the foreign wheat—home-grown 32s. 5d., foreign 33s. 9d.

It is probable that the condition of imported wheat has been comparatively and relatively better than home wheat during later years, and perhaps the more general adoption of roller milling has placed the soft English wheats at a disadvantage.

These are some of the facts on this question which consumers will do well to consider. The British farmer can supply their wants, with due warning for preparation, whenever they are prepared to pay him a remunerative price. It must be remembered that he is working on a soil which for hundreds of years has had to support the nation, and that its present fertility is an acquired one, due solely to his skill and ability. His farming must be, under our economic conditions, of an intensive nature—he has to contend with difficulties in the form of rent, rates, and tithe, by which his foreign competitor is less burdened, and he has to face uncertain seasons and constantly recurring bad weather, hindering the ripening and harvesting of crops. It must also be kept in mind that, owing to our large population, the British farmer's land will have an artificial value when compared with the same soil under different surroundings and circumstances.

The consumer is therefore drawing his supplies from land that has for centuries back been accumulating its natural fertility, where the farming is extensive, and land is obtainable below its intrinsic value. While the British farmer is called upon to supply so many heads per acre, his competitor can choose the number of acres that is to supply a head. The man who grows produce that will yield a remunerative return is a farmer; the man who does not is a fool. We must remember that growing sound healthy crops is not the 'whole art' of farming. These crops have also to be safely secured or harvested, and advantageously placed on the market. The success of a practical farmer is judged not so much on the yield per acre he obtains, as on the return per acre he receives when marketing his produce. Our farmers have the knowledge and skill, and the soil is capable of supplying the consumers' wants in wheat, whenever it is found that by doing so a profitable return will result. The real question is, whether it is safe to be dependent on seventy-five per cent. of our present wheat demand being supplied from outside sources? As we said before, this is a question for the consumer—that is, the general population outside the agricultural classes. We are not an agricultural nation, but that section directly interested in agriculture gets the compliment of being termed the 'backbone' of the country by the industrial and commercial classes. These classes regulate the demand for bread-stuffs, and if they are content with being so dependent on foreign and non-permanent sources of supply, the disparity between home produce and imports will be still further accentuated.

There is another aspect of the question which deserves notice. This large proportion of *imported* bread-stuffs ought absolutely to increase the fertility of a country, for obvious reasons; but we know that the fertility of our country is not increased by it, for, through the sewerage arrangements of our towns, this valuable fertilising matter is wasted, and the soil thereby deprived of what would be a valuable addition to its producing power. Surely if the non-agricultural classes really consider, as they say, the soil of a country to be the only permanent and reliable source of wealth, they should take steps that the agricultural community might share in the benefits of this large importation of bread-stuffs, by having the manurial value or residue of this imported wheat conserved and applied to the land.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

By G. Manville Fenn.

CHAPTER X.—(*continued*).

By this time Wynyan was walking angrily up and down the library; but at the last sentence he turned upon the doctor in indignant astonishment.

'Well, what are you looking at, boy? Why, I've seen her through everything—been like a second father to her; and now, sir, I'm face to face with the fact that poor Dalton is going home, and that he must leave that girl unsettled. Will you leave off wearing out my old Turkey and sit down, sir? Am I your friend, or am I not?'

Wynyan dropped back into his chair.

'That's better.—Now, look here, Wynyan—Paul Wynyan—as soon as Dalton comes back—he won't stop down there long—go in to his room and speak out like a man. Tell him you love her, and ask him to make you his partner and consent to an early marriage.'

'And Miss Dalton, sir?' said Wynyan coldly. 'You forget her. Is she some marketable commodity that she is to be traded away like that?'

The doctor refilled his glass, passed the old bottle, tossed off his wine, smacked his lips, and then shook his finger at his guest.

'Now, look here, my lad; don't you ever speak to me again in that would-be clever, sarcastic fashion, because it won't do. I'm giving you a prescription for your moral health, and I know what I'm saying. That dear girl likes you—mind, I say *likes* you. Heaven bless her! She's as sweet and innocent as an angel, and don't know what love is. She's none of your fast, coquettish girls, ready to listen to every chattering fool; but a sweet, girlish thing, who likes you, esteems you. Get the old man's consent, and then tell her you love her, and—bless your heart!—it will be like sunshine on a bud. It will open out.'

Wynyan shook his head.

'But I tell you it will, sir. If it doesn't, you shan't have her, even if Dalton says yes. And believe me, boy, he will. He knows that scamp Brant will be worrying her—he has proposed to her—I know; and I believe she sent him about his business with a flea in his ear. Plain enough, the other night. There is nobody else. Might have been scores; but she's not the girl those fellows can talk to.—There; I've done.—Now, then, will you do as I say?'

Wynyan sat with his brow wrinkled, gazing down at the carpet, but made no reply.

'Do you hear what I say?'

'Yes, sir.'

'And you will ask Dalton like a man?'

'I will go to him and ask him like a man, for I do love'——

'There; that will do, my dear boy. Keep that for Rénée.—Then, that's off my mind.—Now, light your cigar; I want to talk to you about something else.'

Wynyan slowly obeyed, but it was unconsciously, for his blood seemed to be singing in his arteries, and his pulses bounding with excitement.

'I'll have a fresh one too,' said the doctor, selecting one very carefully from the box, and going through a good deal of business before he lit it and lay back, sending out heavy clouds.

'Look here, Wynyan,' he said at last; and the young man started from his musings. 'Ah, you were dreaming about your business: put that aside for the present. I want to talk to you about mine.'

'I am all attention, sir,' said Wynyan.

'That's right.—Now, then, confidence for confidence, my lad.'

'You may trust me, sir.'

'I know that, or I shouldn't say a word. You see, I know plenty of men, but they are mostly doctors, and I can't talk to them. A man can't get on without friends, and there are times when he feels as if he must confide in somebody. Hear that?'

'Yes; I am listening,' said Wynyan, wonderingly.

'I told you I was precious clever in some things, and that I was an idiot in others, didn't I?'

'Yes, doctor.'

'Well, now, then, you'll see. There are times, I say, when, if a man has something on his mind, he feels that he must tell it to some one. Murderers, if they are not found out, get like that at last, and confess.'

'But you have not committed a murder, sir,' said Wynyan, smiling.

'Thank you, my boy—thank you for your good opinion. Ill-natured people would not say that of a doctor. But let that pass. Well, Wynyan, my lad, sick people like to talk to one another about their complaints. My waiting-room could tell some strange tales about that. Now you're sick—so am I. I've got it too, badly.'

'You, sir?' cried Wynyan.

'Yes, I! Going to laugh at me, and call me an old fool?'

'I am going, if you will let me, Dr Kilpatrick, always to look upon you as one of my closest friends.'

'You shall, boy, and find me a true one too.—But there: it's a fact. It's Nature, too, my lad, and there's no beating her. I went on for a great many years, too busy to think about such a thing, and ready to laugh at elderly patients who were smitten with the disease—for it is a disease, boy, and it kills some poor wretches—indirectly, of course. Then I found how ignorant I had been, and that I had the longing to cease living my lonely old bachelor life. The lady came at last.'

Wynyan waited, for the doctor had ceased. Then he went on again.

'Hundreds of women I might have had. Patients ready to jump at me, ugly as I am; but there was only one woman for me, Wynyan

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—a splendid woman, sweet, innocent, gentle-hearted, and, like myself, a bit weak. Just the right age. A woman who, if she would sit at the head of my table, would make me a happy man.'

'Then why not marry her, sir? You have told me what to do. Have you asked her?'

'No, sir.'

'Why not?'

'I can't.'

'Come, doctor; you have made me bold to speak to you, and I am as interested now in your future as you are in mine. Why can't you ask her?'

'Because she doesn't care for me.'

It was on Wynyan's lips to say, 'I even do not know that I am cared for;' but he could not bring even a reference to Rénée into the conversation now.

'I can't,' said the doctor after a pause—'I can't, sir. I've been there with the intention time after time; but so sure as I have screwed myself up to risk it and speak out like a man, directly or indirectly, there has always been that confounded foreigner in the way.'

'Villar Endoza?'

'That's the man, sir. The poor lady's dazzled by him, his cash, and his title, and the bit of romance about his Spanish-American place.'

'You amaze me, sir.'

'Humph! Why? Isn't she all I said?'

'Yes, of course; but I never dreamed of it.'

'I have, and I go on dreaming. There it is: he's your fine courtly, dignified nobleman; while I'm neither good-looking nor ornamental. That fellow carries all before him with the women-kind. I don't, but I'm the real stuff to wear well. I'd make her a good husband; but no: I'm out of court. It's the old story, Wynyan—a foreign Count, glamour and romance, sentiment and poetry, palace lifting to eternal summer, and that sort of thing; only this chap isn't a humbug, like Claude Melnotte. It's very disgusting, my dear sir, for here am I, solid oak, and I love her with a calm, true, middle-aged, rather elderly love; while that fellow's only veneer—Spanish mahogany veneer. If he'd make her happy, I wouldn't care; but he doesn't want her. It's all flattery and flam. The man's playing a part. Smooth to people, so as to make them serve him in some way. When he has got all he wants for his confounded country, they may go to Jericho or anywhere. Confound him and his daughter too! I never liked them, though they've been good paying patients. I was always sorry to see them so intimate with Rénée; but Dalton was obliged to be civil to them: he has drawn heaps of money through the Count, as you know.'

Wynyan nodded.

'I shall be glad when he has done all he has to do, and taken his girl and gone. No; I shan't, because it will break that poor lady's heart. She's ready to lie down and let him wipe his shoes upon her. Anything for a smile, while she hates to see me in the house.'

'Then she knows, sir?'

'Oh yes: she knows, poor thing; and I know she can't care for me. There; I've finished, Wynyan. It's done me no end of good. Old fool, though, ain't I?'

Wynyan held out his hand, and it was grasped with a long, firm clasp.

'Thank you, my lad. You and I always got on together. Now we'll be very great friends, eh? You'll come and see me. Drop in as you did to-night, for a chop, eh? and report progress, as they say up at the House.—Now, once more; you'll speak to Dalton?'

'I have promised you, sir.'

'That's right, boy—that's right. Then, now that both our minds are eased, we'll smoke a cigar in real earnest over a cup of coffee. You've begun two, and I three, but we let them all go out. Too bad, for they're a good kind.'

The coffee was brought in; but the smoking proved even then a failure; and soon after, the new intimates parted, one of them to lie awake for hours thinking over his promise, and asking himself what would be the result.

THE HUMOURS OF NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE.

The daily newspaper is one of the most familiar of our institutions. But of the myriads who peruse it daily, how few there are who have any adequate conception of the labour, the ingenuity, the experience—the brains and the capital—expended in the collection and publication of its varied contents. Perhaps it is that familiarity with the daily newspaper breeds, not exactly a contempt for it, but a sort of indifference to its marvellous qualities. At any rate, when it is read, it is flung carelessly aside. Yet the average daily cost of its production ranges from one thousand to three thousand pounds. And though the average reader may not think it, there is much tragedy, much pathos, and, as we shall see, much humour and scheming and subterfuge also, interwoven in the making of the daily newspaper. It is said that all is fair in love and war. It might be added that all is fair, too, in newspaper competition. The truth is that each daily paper has to fight literally for its existence against a host of fierce competitors, and at times it cannot afford to be too squeamish as to its methods.

Fifty years ago the two leading London newspapers were the *Times* and the *Morning Herald*. Fierce was the fight for supremacy which they waged for years, and though at last the *Herald* succumbed, its vigilance and resource frequently pushed its great and powerful rival to the wall. The trial of Daniel O'Connell and other leaders of the Repeal movement for conspiracy in 1844 was the occasion of a curious and amusing incident in the competition for popular favour between these metropolitan journals. The greatest interest was centred in the trial. The *Times* and the *Herald* not only sent representatives to Dublin, but chartered special steamers to run between Kingstown and Holyhead, in order to expedite the conveyance of each day's report of the trial from Dublin to London, as there was then no telegraph system. The representative of the *Times* was Sir (then Mr) W. H. Russell, the well-known and veteran war correspondent. The trial, which lasted twenty-five days, concluded on a Saturday night with a verdict of 'Guilty.' Mr Russell immediately sped to London with the news. A special train which had been awaiting him with steam up all the evening at Westland Row conveyed him from Dublin to Kingstown; and crossing the Channel in the chartered steamer, he travelled between Holyhead and London in another special train, leaving his rival of the *Morning Herald* behind him in Dublin. The office of the *Times* in Printing House Square was reached late on Sunday night. As Mr Russell sprang out of his cab in the Square he noticed a number of men in shirt-sleeves, evidently employees on the *Times*, lounging about the office door. One of them remarked to him: 'We're glad to hear they've found them guilty at last.' 'Oh yes, all guilty, but on different counts,' replied Mr Russell as he passed into the office. He was just in time to have his report with the exclusive news of the result of the trial put into type for Monday's issue of the *Times*.

Tired as he was after his long journey, it was naturally late in the evening of Monday when he awoke in a Fleet Street hotel. He had gone to sleep in a jubilant mood; the awakening was depressing in the extreme. He was handed a letter from Delane, the great editor of the *Times*. It ran: 'You managed very badly. The *Morning Herald* has got the verdict. This must be inquired into.'

The inquiry was accordingly held that night. It turned out that Mr Russell's interlocutor at the office door was an emissary of the enemy. 'The confounded miscreants!' exclaimed Delane, as he thumped the table. 'But it was sharp of them.' And turning to Mr Russell, he said: 'Let this be a warning to you to keep your lips closed and your eyes open. Never speak about your business. Commit it to paper for the editor, and for him alone. We would have given hundreds of pounds to have stopped your few words last night.'

Here is another story of a newspaper in the exclusive possession of an important piece of news being overreached by a trick. In October 1854 the passenger steamship *Arctic* foundered on its way between Liverpool and New York. There was only one survivor, a sailor named Burns, who was picked up from a spar by a passing steamer. He was known to have landed at New York; but though the reporters of the various newspapers hunted the city for him, he could not be found. After midnight, the news editor of the New York *Times* was going home by tram, when, to his profound astonishment and consternation, he overheard a man in the car telling the conductor that Burns was in the office of the New York *Herald*. Jumping out of the car at once, he drove back to the *Times* office. The paper was ready for the press, and the compositors were about to go home. But the news editor stopped the publication of the paper, and locking all the doors of the premises, to prevent any one leaving, he sent a trusty messenger to get the earliest possible copy of the *Herald*. It was procured about six o'clock in the morning. The story told by Burns was cut out of the *Herald* and the copy divided amongst the whole staff, numbering two hundred compositors, so that in half-an-hour the sensational narrative was in type; and by seven o'clock the *Times* was selling in thousands in the streets of New York. The *Herald*, which had given Burns five hundred dollars for his story, and had detained him all night in its editorial room, in order that he might not fall into the hands of any of its rivals, believed it had the information all to itself, and it kept back its city edition till nine o'clock, the usual hour of publication. By that time all New York had read of the disaster in the *Times*.

Probably no journal has contributed more than the *New York Herald* to the humours of newspaper enterprise. There is scarcely anything in newspaper history more funny in its way than the manner in which Mr H. M. Stanley was commissioned by the *New York Herald* to find Dr Livingstone in the wilds of Africa. Mr Bennett was staying in Paris in the early part of 1871 when he conceived the idea of despatching at the sole cost of his journal an expedition for the discovery and relief of the great African traveller. He telegraphed for Mr Stanley, then representing the *Herald* at Madrid. The latter, not knowing what business was in hand, left instantly for Paris, and arriving at the Grand Hotel at eleven o'clock at night, went at once to Mr Bennett's room. That gentleman was in bed. 'Come in, sir. Who are you?' he said, in reply to Stanley's knock.

'My name is Stanley,' answered the correspondent.

'Oh yes,' replied Mr Bennett. 'Sit down—glad to see you. Have you any idea where Livingstone is?'

'No.'

'Well, I think he is living, and is to be found. Will you try to find him?'

'Yes.'

'Good. You can have an unlimited credit. Use your own means; carry out your own plans. Good-night!'

But with all the fertility of resource and extraordinary sharpness and unlimited means at its back, the *Herald* was now and then—as I have already shown—badly 'sold' by its New York rivals. Here is another instance. When the *Herald* fitted out the *Pandora* for her famous expedition to the Arctic regions, under the command of Captain Allen Young, it naturally enough refused to allow the *New York World* to send a representative. The *Herald* thought it should have exclusively all the information about the expedition, and accordingly the only journalist allowed to accompany the *Pandora* was its own representative, Mr M'Gahan. But the *World* was not to be balked. Letter after letter dealing with the voyage and adventures of the expedition appeared in the *World*, while the *Herald*, which had fitted out the expedition, and had allowed no journalist but its own representative to accompany it, was strangely silent. It was not till the return home of the expedition that this mystery was explained. The London agent of the *World*, acting on instructions from headquarters, had secured the services of a talented member of the crew of the *Pandora*, known as 'a sea lawyer,' while the vessel lay at Plymouth. It was this man who despatched letters, under cover, to the *World* at every available opportunity, while Mr M'Gahan, unaware, of course, of the existence of a rival in the forecastle, decided to wait till his return, when he could present the whole narrative to the public. But when that time came, he found his book forestalled and largely discounted by the publication of the sailor's letters in the *World*.

Here, however, is the story of 'a big score' made by the *Herald* over its rivals. One year the *Herald* published a Presidential message in full on the morning of the day it was sent to the Senate. The *coup* was effected by a real stroke of genius on the part of the managing editor of the paper. The Associated Press, which is the great news agency of America, was informed by some person that the *Herald* had obtained a surreptitious copy of the message from their office, from which it was not to be sent to the newspapers, in accordance with the usual arrangement with the President, until the following morning. The agent of the Associated Press went to the managing editor of the *Herald* to protest against such conduct. As a matter of fact the story was untrue; but the managing editor of the *Herald* astutely led the agent of the Associated Press to believe that it was well founded.

'Very well,' said the visitor; 'if that be the case, the only thing we can do is to send out the message to-night, even at the expense of breaking faith with the President. Our customers must be properly served.'

This was what the managing editor had led up to. He sent orders to the foreman of the composing-room to be ready to 'set' an extra page at a late hour; so that when the President's message began to arrive about one o'clock that night it was quickly put into type. The *Herald* came out the next morning with the *entire* of that important State document; while the other papers, not being prepared to deal with it, coming as it did at so late an hour, could only use a few disconnected paragraphs.

The *New York Herald* is also the hero of an amusing display of enterprise in connection with the visit paid by the Prince of Wales to the United States some years ago. On the day the Prince went to see Niagara, the *Herald* engaged all the telegraphic wires there between certain hours, so that it might have a monopoly in its report of the interesting proceedings. But as the Prince did not arrive at the Falls till long after the expected hour, no 'copy' for the *Herald* was available within the time for which the wires had been secured.

'What is to be done to keep the wires in hands?' telegraphed the chief of the *Herald* staff at Niagara to Mr Gordon Bennett.

'Telegraph the Book of Genesis,' replied the autocrat of the *Herald*.

This was done at a cost of seven hundred dollars, but still no 'copy' had come to hand.

'What now?' again telegraphed the chief at Niagara to Mr Bennett.

'Continue on to the Book of Revelation if necessary,' promptly responded Mr Bennett. But, happily, it was unnecessary to do this, for before the Book of Exodus was finished, some of the 'copy' had arrived, and the *Herald's* triumph was secured.

It is not often that similar opportunities for newspaper *coups* arise on this side of the Atlantic; but when they do, our journalists are not found wanting in the necessary astuteness and resource to make the most of them. This is shown, I think, in the story how Mr Archibald Forbes secured for the *Daily News* the narrative of the survivors of the emigrant ship *Cospatrick*, which was burned on its way to New Zealand in 1874. The survivors were three in number—Macdonald, the second-mate, and two ordinary seamen, who had been adrift on a raft for weeks, and had sustained life only by a recourse to cannibalism. The men were sent home by the mail steamer *Nyanza*, and about thirty journalists assembled at Plymouth to interview them on their arrival. The *Daily News* had a special representative at Plymouth; but he informed his editor that he had no hope of beating his competitors, as, after all sorts of scheming, it was finally unanimously decided by the journalists present that the best course was for all to board the *Nyanza* together in the mail-tug and get Macdonald to tell his story in their midst for the common good. The editor of the *Daily News* did not like this arrangement at all. So he sent for Mr Forbes—who had earned great prestige for the paper, not only by his brilliant services during the Franco-Prussian War, but by two thrilling true stories of wrecks at sea which he had written shortly before the *Cospatrick* disaster—and told him the situation. That evening Mr Forbes went down to Plymouth and put up at an obscure inn in a suburb. Through the agency of a local shipbroker whom he knew, he chartered a tug, the *Volunteer*, and ordered the skipper to be in readiness with steam up at an unfrequented jetty on the farther side of the harbour. At three o'clock on the last day of the year 1874, news arrived that the *Nyanza* had passed the Lizard Light, about twenty-five miles out from Plymouth. Mr Forbes went to the railway station and engaged a whole first-class compartment in the train that was to leave for London at midnight. Then at dusk he went out in the *Volunteer* to board the *Nyanza* in advance of the mail-tug which would bring out the thirty journalists. This he only succeeded in doing at the imminent risk of his life. He jumped from the bridge of the tug, as it rose on the top of a big wave, and just succeeded in catching the mizzen chains of the mail-steamer, whence he was pulled by the collar on to the deck.

'Where can I find Macdonald, the mate of the *Cospatrick?* Quick!' was his first breathless exclamation as he regained his feet.

He found the man below; but not a word would he utter till he had made a bargain.

'I'll give you fifty pounds down,' cried Mr Forbes, 'if you tell me your whole story and tell it to me alone.' Macdonald agreed to this; and Mr Forbes had an hour with him before the other journalists came on the scene. He then handed Macdonald over to the other representative of the *Daily News*, who had come out in the mail-tug, with directions to get the man into the engaged compartment of the train to London, and obtain the fag end of the story, while he himself wired to the *Daily News* from

Plymouth a graphic and thrilling description of the disaster.

But how fared it with the other newspaper men? That, perhaps, is the most amusing feature of the story. The two unhappy sailors were so utterly imbecile that they could give no account of the disaster; and Macdonald, true to his bargain with Mr Forbes, would hold no converse on the subject with the clamorous and angry journalists.

'The public have a right to learn the details of your story,' exclaimed one of the group.

'A' weel,' replied Macdonald in broad Scotch, 'they'll can read it i' the mornin's *Daily News;* it'll be a' there.'

However, the attempt to retain the exclusive possession of Macdonald for the *Daily News* on board the train did not succeed. The rival journalists swarmed into the reserved compartment; and thus obtained for their respective newspapers the tail end of the extraordinary story of the mate of the unfortunate *Cospatrick.*

STORY OF LEE PING AND 'THE STORK THAT LIVES A THOUSAND YEARS.'

By GUY BOOTHBY.

> O sodeyn wo! that ever art successour
> To worldly blisse, spreynd with bitternesse;
> The ende of the joye of our worldly labour;
> Wo occupieth the fyn of our gladnesse.
> Harken this conseil for thy sikernesse:
> Upon thy gladde daye have in thy mynde
> The unware wo or harm that cometh behynde.
>
> CHAUCER—*Man of Lawes Tale.*

THIS story might very well have been called 'The Rout of Love by the Unforeseen.' It should also go a long way towards proving the true value of love as a business principle.

In the first place, you must understand that, even for a Chinaman, Lee Ping was not fair to look upon; his age was nearer seventy than forty, and for a Celestial that is very old indeed. His face was puckered like a sun-dried crab-apple into a thousand wrinkles; and his pigtail, once the pride and glory of his existence, now consisted principally of horse hair. But he was very rich for all that, so rich, indeed, that every one, or nearly every one, respected him.

The Police department was the only exception, and, as all the world knows, that service invariably casts suspicious eyes upon a Chinaman, or, for that matter, on any one else who wears the same suit of clothes year in and year out, and can show no outward and visible sign of how he derives his support. Therefore, to avoid any friction that might arise, Lee Ping allowed it to be supposed that he obtained his income from a general store on the railway works at Banya Creek, in the northern territory of South Australia; when in reality his gains came from an illicit 'Fan-tan' shop, carried on every night for the benefit of the coolies behind the canvas curtains of his store front.

About the beginning of the summer of which I'm going to tell you, he complained of being lonely. So, for the sake of his wealth, which was undoubtedly great, a little Chinese lady cast in her lot with his; and being, like all his countrymen, fond of high-sounding pet names, he christened her 'The Stork that lives a Thousand Years.' Her real name was Sika, and she was in every way delightful—indeed, so charming was she that Quong Shang, a youth of low and dissipated habits, loved her, and even laboured as a coolie on the construction works in order to have the wherewithal to meet her and to gamble at Lee Ping's abode.

By some means, system or no system, he won enormous sums, and for better security he hid the plunder in his pigtail, which was nearly a yard long and as thick as his wrist.

In the intervals of the game he found leisure to whisper words of affection into the pretty Sika's ears; and Lee Ping, becoming cognisant of the fact, prayed to his joss daily for the youth's destruction. But being a sound business man, as well as a jealous husband, with the desire of accomplishing his ruin he united the hope of obtaining his wealth, and to achieve both these things he took counsel with 'The Stork that lives a Thousand Years.'

Thenceforward, Sika allowed her adorer to understand that she was by no means averse to his attentions. On the contrary, she let him see that to such an extent did she favour them, that she was willing to assist in encompassing the death of Lee Ping, and, more important still, to escape with his wealth and the plunder of his house to China.

Quong went as nearly into ecstasies as it is possible for a Chinaman to go, and promised that their future should be spent in devising original pet names for each other, and in calculating their gains from some remunerative opium concern. Thus you will see that his love was based on the soundest of commercial principles.

Now, to his other occupations Lee Ping added the duties and emoluments of Government informer, and many of the incomprehensible arrests of his too confiding countrymen might have been traced from the whitewashed sanctum of the police office to his musty-smelling back-parlour.

If you would clearly understand what follows, you must remember that Chinese life in the northern territory of Australia is permeated through and through by secret societies—social, political, or religious, as the case may be. And to endeavour to bring members of these societies to justice by ordinary means is a hopeless, if not a well-nigh impossible task. But, as we have learned, the authorities had to a certain extent overcome these difficulties with the assistance of our versatile friend Lee Ping. Not that even then they always captured the right man, for you will see that it was just as easy for the real offender to buy over the traitor as for the police to do so.

I do not mean to say that the system had not its drawbacks—what system is without them? Its advantages, however, lay in this, that whenever a crime of extraordinary magnitude had been committed, the police could always satisfy public feeling by bringing *some* criminal, if only a Chinaman, to trial, and what is more, be certain of convicting him on circumstantial evidence—when, as likely as not, he had never been near the place at all. In the eyes of the law, one little brown man is as another. And this is of course as it should be.

Now, as I have said before, when these events took place, the territory lay travailing in the heat of summer: not an English summer of tennis parties, river picnics, and yacht races, but months of sand and flies, with the thermometer hovering continually between one hundred and ten and one hundred and twenty degrees in the shade. A summer when, throughout the day, sun-strokes were common, and when, after nightfall, deadly miasmas crept up the banks of the watercourse, swept down the tented streets, and wrestled for the lives of every human being in the settlement.

In those days, the worn-out overseers on the construction works were as Egyptian taskmasters, and the heart of the Mongolian was as lead within him.

From morning till night Quong Shang bore burdens on the works and thought of Sika. In the intervals he invented horrible tortures for Lee Ping, and longed for night to come when, between the games, he would be able to discuss them with his lady-love.

But about this time rumours were abroad. That mighty potentate, the chief-engineer, in whose eyes individual Chinese coolies were about as important as earthworms, had decreed the moving of the camp ten miles farther to the southward. Quong heard of this, and took heed; the time for action had arrived—now or never must his scheme see practice.

For another reason, Quong was additionally anxious to be gone: his pigtail was heavy with gold; and being a prudent youth, he was disinclined to run any more risk than he could help.

In their nightly consultations, they had arranged the details after this fashion: 'The Stork that lives a Thousand Years' was to find the treasure and appropriate the portable articles of plunder, while Quong Shang, 'The Brave,' carried out the deed itself.

The night set in dark and awesome. A monstrous wind, blowing from across the desert, whistled mournfully down the canvas streets, the trees bent and swayed before it, and black thunder-clouds gathered in the west. Thick banks of dust whirled and eddied round Lee Ping's abode, and at intervals, flashes of lightning glimmered along the horizon.

Quong and Sika met earlier than usual, and for the last time overhauled their plans together in the jungle behind the camp. Now, Quong, though vindictive, was not courageous, and while in theory he had often butchered Lee Ping with remorseless atrocity, in practice he was already beginning to repent him of his share in the transaction. He even hinted that 'The Stork' would be able to find better opportunities of completing the business than he could ever hope to do. This, naturally enough, did not meet with her approval, and she told him so in terms which left him no alternative but to carry out the deed, or there and then resign all thoughts of a future with herself. He thereupon changed his mind, and Sika sped away to give her lord his supper, as becomes a faithful and devoted spouse. During the meal she told him all Quong's arrangements, and Lee Ping rattled his toothless gums together to show his appreciation of the joke.

The night rolled on, and from his lair in the jungle, Quong watched the lights fade out one by one till all grew black as the clouds above him. The deeper darkness that precedes dawn brought him out of hiding and down the little hill. Approaching the store with stealthy tread, he paused to listen. Not a sound came from within—Sika had evidently fulfilled her promise, and, according to arrangement, had soothed her lord to sleep with tender little love-songs and much endearment. Quong chuckled, and moved towards the door. Finding that no one stirred, he gave the signal. Then the door was softly opened, and Sika stood before him—her finger on her lips. Quong, whispering that she was 'the light of his eyes and the lotos leaf of his life,' or words to that effect, entered, hatchet in hand, trembling violently.

There is an old saying that 'the woman who hesitates is lost.' This time, it was the man. But the moral is just the same. For while Quong was endeavouring to muster up sufficient courage to find his victim and aim the fatal blow, he was suddenly seized from behind and thrown heavily upon the floor. His dismay was boundless, and it became even more so when he found his intended victim standing over him ferociously brandishing a tomahawk. He remembers no more, for a pair of small thin fingers, undoubtedly Sika's—he had often praised their dainty beauty—were twining themselves remorselessly round his gullet, pressing tighter and tighter till he lost all consciousness.

On recovering, he found himself across the creek, chained hand and foot to a very substantial log in the police cells. He was very confused, very sore, and the marks of eight of the tiniest fingers imaginable were just beginning to turn black around his windpipe. Then came the saddest discovery of all—his pigtail, his bank, as well as the pride and glory of his existence, was gone, cut off at the roots, and with it all his treasure. Bumping his head against the log, he wept and groaned in very bitterness of spirit.

A week later, he was conveyed to Palmerston, where he was charged with robbing the till of the *Hotel Oriental*—hitherto, an unexplained burglary; and, on the evidence of Lee Ping and Sika, was condemned to three years' penal servitude with hard labour.

On the expiration of his sentence, he learned that Lee Ping had returned to China, marvellously rich, and that with him had departed the faithless 'Stork that lives a Thousand Years.'

Quong's new pigtail grows apace, but though he anoints it daily, he takes small pride in it, for he has no Sika now to praise its length and beauty. He has, however, since his release manufactured for himself a most elaborate deity, before whom he burns the most horrible of joss sticks. If you are curious as to his reasons, he will tell you that he is doing his best to work a spell, whereby Lee Ping shall lose his health, the love of Sika, every halfpenny of his accumulated wealth, and become the possessor of all miseries conceivable.

Now, there are three morals to be deduced from this story, and they run as follows: 'Never play with edged tools;' 'Leave love alone;' and, 'If you must murder the husband, think twice before telling the wife.' There are several others, but I don't suppose you will need my assistance to discover them.

TRY MALLORCA.

By Alan Walters, Author of *A Lotos-eater in Capri.*

Within fifty hours of eating a chop at Charing Cross, I was sipping pale chicken broth a thousand miles away in the Fonda de Mallorca, in the sleepy old Balearic city of Palma. A dusty night-journey from the Quai d'Austerlitz, and a midnight basin of mysterious soup at red-roofed Tours; past Poitiers, looking like a card-board toy in the magical moonbeams; five minutes' pause beneath the rocky height of hoary Angoulême; and so on into Bordeaux just as the sun is giving a morning kiss to the tall tower of St Michel. Away, again, after a precipitate breakfast of *bric-à-brac*, to Narbonne, cradle of the Roman power in Gaul, where a more deliberate dinner fortifies the inner man for another night out of bed. With a rush and a roar, the train wakes the echoes of the Pyrenees; the Spanish border is left behind, and in the first rays of dawn I catch sight of the far-off shimmer of the Mediterranean. But a few hours more, and I am rolling over its breezy waters on board the *Manacor*, towards the little archipelago of sunny rocks known to us moderns as the Balearic Isles, a name given by the Romans of old to the two largest islands of the group, on account, as some think, of the skilful use by the natives of the Phœnician sling.

The Balearic group—consisting of three large islands and many smaller ones, most of them mere specks of rock—has a total area of some eighteen hundred and sixty square miles, and a population of three hundred thousand souls, five-sixths of whom are divided between Mallorca (Majorca) and Minorca. Although the point of Mallorca nearest to Spain is but ninety miles from the mainland, the voyage from Barcelona to Palma, the capital, is nearer a hundred and fifty. The island measures about sixty miles from east to west; whereas its neighbour, Minorca, twenty miles away, is but a third of the size; and Iviza, smallest but most beautiful, is barely four miles square. A glance at the map shows us why the islands have been the scene of so much stirring history, and why they have felt the hand of so many masters. Anciently, they were held by the Phœnicians and Carthaginians, the latter of whom were the builders of Mahon, so called from the family of Mago. A quarter of a century after the fall of Carthage came the Romans; in 423 the Vandals; and in 798 the Moors. At the beginning of the twelfth century the ravages of the Moslems had risen to such a pitch that Pope Pascal II. persuaded the men of Pisa to go and mend matters, which for a time they did; but in 1115 the Moors again got the upper hand, and were not finally crushed till after the lapse of more than a century by Don Jaime of Aragon. In the fourteenth century the islands were added to the crown of Aragon by Pedro IV., and, with the exception of Minorca, have ever since formed one of the forty-nine provinces of the kingdom of Spain. In 1708 Port Mahon was taken by General Stanhope; five years later, Minorca was formally ceded to England by the Peace of Utrecht. In 1756 it was seized by the French, only to be restored at the Peace of Versailles in 1769; and after various other turns of fortune, was finally handed over to Spain, in 1803, by the Peace of Amiens.

The climate of Mallorca is exceedingly pleasant, and much of its scenery very picturesque. For the most part, the temperature is equable, wintry winds being checked by the *cordillera* in the north, nearly five thousand feet high; and the heat of summer being tempered by sea-breezes. As elsewhere in the Mediterranean, the spring-time is most enjoyable; while in the autumn and winter evenings, fires are decidedly comfortable. The thermometer seldom marks more than ninety degrees Fahrenheit, or less than forty; but there is a good deal of moisture in the atmosphere all the year round, and at certain seasons rapid changes are not unknown. For an excursion on a bright winter's day you must carry, as you must at Nice or Cannes, a sun-shade in one hand and a warm wrap in the other; and in Palma itself the sombre, ill-paved streets are mostly so narrow and shut in by the deep overhanging eaves, that the sun never warms them.

The Baleares, noted in days of old for their productiveness, brought forth corn that Pliny praised for its weight and quality, and grapes, held by the Romans in high esteem. At the present day the vegetation is rich and luxuriant, and immense quantities are grown of oranges, lemons, small red apples with a taste of nectarines, superb yellow grapes, dates, pomegranates, and figs. Deer at one time were plentiful, and a species of bird, called by Pliny *phalacrocorax* (perhaps a coot), furnished many a dish for the *gourmets* of Rome. Olives, originally planted by the men of Carthage, still flourish and abound. Of game there is none now but hares, rabbits, and partridges, with a few winter snipe and woodcock.

As for the people, be it understood that a Mallorquin is no more a Spaniard than a Shetlander is a Scot. Like his Moro-Aragonese forebears, he is a lazy, ill-conditioned, unenterprising sloth, with but one idea of life—that of siesta. The number of those who live by active and visible labour is astonishingly small. The first thing that strikes you on landing in Palma is that it is a place where everything long ago left off happening. Of life there, it may truly be said, 'les jours se suivent et se ressemblent.' Palma is as quiet as Malta is noisy, and that is saying a good deal. Food is cheap and abundant. A robber is as rare as a beggar; and life and property are perfectly secure in every

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corner of the island. The people, if not active in the cultivation of moral virtue, at least show a want of sympathy for that which is violent or uncharitable; though ignorant, idle, and superstitious, they are honest and inoffensive, and live in the bond of peace. If a couple of common folk have a difference, they straighten it out with their fists, and neither is the worse.

In outward appearance there is much to remind one of their semi-African origin. Often the features are refined and well cut, of a pale olive hue, with dark eyes and hair. A common dress is a pair of loose, wide, blue cotton pantaloons, tied below the knee; a gay cotton shirt; and a twisted handkerchief on the head; to which on *fiestas* are added a blue cloth cloak and a hat as big as a loo table. The priests wear their huge hats with the rim at each side rolled up, looking like a long cylinder extending a couple of feet fore and aft. The country women wear mostly the blue burnous of Africa, or a corset and abbreviated skirt, with a *rebocillo* on the head, an arrangement of thin cambric like a mantilla gathered in at the throat, and falling in pretty plaits over the bosom. In the Baleares, however, as in Corsica and Capri and in every other island of the blue Iberian Sea, the fashions of Paris are swiftly spreading and swallowing up the *sayas* and *mantillas* and *rebocillos*, and other piquant portions of the old national costumes.

Before I had been many hours in Palma I discovered that sharp lines of demarcation are drawn between the upper and lower classes of the inhabitants. There still exists a tolerably unadulterated feudalism, a recognisable remnant of the ancient vassalage, with a broad impassable gap between the owner and the tiller of the soil, the señor and the occupier. The pride of family, which used to be carried to a ridiculous point, is in these days but slowly giving place to modern influences, and is still hardly inferior to that of MacDermot, Prince of Coolavin, who objected to his lowly-born wife sitting to eat at the same table with him. At the present moment there are no fewer than three dozen members of the Spanish peerage who draw their titles from the Balearics. The nine *solars* or barons who fought with Don Jaime at the siege of Palma founded families that are still flourishing like petty sovereigns as a separate class from the rest of the nobility; and only in rare and recent instances have they taken wives or husbands from beyond their own 'set.' They regard themselves with far greater veneration than that with which they are looked upon by the classes whom they despise. They are known commonly as *Butifarras*, literally, a 'large sausage;' a term used in a sense corresponding to our slang 'bloated swell.' Beneath the ennobled class comes the commercial body, under whom in gradation are the farmers, the farm-labourers (who retain certain Arabic characteristics), shopkeepers, artisans, and—*longo intervallo*—the Chuetas (long-eared owls), a name of contempt given to the descendants of Jews who are now Christians, but still live apart from the rest of the community in a separate quarter.

I spent several days pleasantly enough in seeing the lions of Palma, among the chief of which is the venerable Cathedral erected in the thirteenth century, close to the sea. What it lacks in grace it makes up for by its vast reposeful grandeur, arresting the eye at once by the peculiar amber hue of its walls. Unfortunately, it is so blocked up by unlovely houses on three sides, that a fair view of its noble proportions is not to be had except from the harbour. The tower is imposing; and the interior, severely Gothic in style, is of such colossal dimensions that one feels like a molecule when standing inside it. The roof of the nave, one hundred and fifty feet in height, is supported by octagonal pillars on wonderfully slender bases. In the choir are some very rich windows and finely carved stalls of walnut wood. A large and horribly-voiced organ, adorned by a wooden Moor's head, is flanked on one side by a doorway that leads into the now disused Capilla Real or royal chapel, the ancient burial-place of the Mallorcan kings, containing some rich decoration, and a wooden gallery of superb Moorish workmanship. In front of the high-altar stands a yellow marble sarcophagus, the grave of Don Jaime the second, son of the conqueror, whose embalmed body rests inside in a coffin with a glass lid, and is drawn out by the sacristan for inspection at a *peseta* (a franc) per head. A much-venerated relic preserved here is a tetradrachm of Rhodes, one of the original thirty pieces of silver—so it is believed—paid by the priests to Judas Iscariot. In the Capilla Corpus Christi is the tomb of Tarella, the first Bishop of Mallorca, who died in 1266; Bishop Galiana reposes in the chapel De la Corona; and in a third is the grave, surmounted by a bust, of the Marquis de la Romana, whose chief claim to distinction is that he was a friend of the Iron Duke's. The Cathedral treasury is well worth a visit, and contains, among many magnificent objects of gold and gems, the chair of Charles V., and an arm of San Sebastian. In nave and choir, every nook and corner is covered with coats of arms, the armorial bearings of those great ones long dead, who were willing, while the Cathedral building fund was languishing, to purchase an easy immortality for themselves at a cost of a thousand livres.

Within a few paces of the Cathedral stands the old Moorish palace, now the residence of the Captain-general, which contains the chapel of Sant' Ana, to be noted for the exquisitely worked vestments in its sacristy, and for the extensive view from the top of the tower. Other churches in Palma are well worth seeing, especially that of St Francis, with its beautiful marbles and cloisters, and its tomb of Raymond Lully, a native of the city, and 'the glory and light of the Balearic kingdom.' As I looked at his last resting-place, I could not but think what a strange career was that of the quixotic philosopher, with his fantastic system of logic and his schemes of regeneration for the Moslem world. While yet a youth, he was appointed Grand Seneschal of the island by Jaime II.; and after sowing a good crop of wild-oats, betook himself in middle life to a solitary retreat at Randa, whence, after eight years of preparation, he went forth, first to Paris and Rome,

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and then to Tunis, where he narrowly escaped death at the hands of those whom he had lashed to fury by his religious zeal. Returning in 1315 as an old man to Africa, the 'Doctor Illuminatus' brought upon himself the fanatical wrath of the men of Bougiah, at whose hands he received such injuries that he died on board ship, just as he was entering the harbour of Palma.

The handsome house of the Bonaparte family stands in the Rue de Palma, decorated with the armorial bearings of Hugo Bonaparte, who in 1411 was sent by the Spanish Government as governor to Corsica. In the Calle de Zarella is an insignificant tenement inhabited by a cobbler, where, in 1541, Charles V. stayed on his way to Algiers. His effigy in stone is carved over one of the windows. Not a few of the Palma residences are really palaces, especially those in the Calle de St Jaime, many of which contain fine collections of antiquities. But quite the most remarkable building in the island is the Louja or old Exchange, built by an architect named Sagrera in 1426. It is a huge square mass, Gothic and castellated, with corner towers connected by an open gallery. Through the superb doorway, surmounted by the figure of an angel, you pass into a chamber of great beauty, with an arched ceiling of stone palm leaves springing from tall fluted columns. From the roof of the building, part of which is now used as a grain store, there is a view which should on no account be missed.

Through the midst of the city gurgles the little Riera, from which in summer a bucket can with difficulty be filled, though there are times and seasons when it rushes along in a noisy and excited torrent. Outside the walls, many charming excursions may be made, one of the prettiest being the drive through the Puerta del Muelle, along under the fortress-wall, and on over the Riera to the hamlet of Arrabal de St Catalina, round which stand many green-shuttered villas, the summer quarters of Palma tradesmen. Farther on, the road passes under two great arches, and leads through a copse up to the castle of Bellver, two miles from Palma, built by Jaime II., and now used as a military prison. It can only be inspected by an order from the *commandant de place* in Palma, which is worth obtaining if only for the sake of the magnificent view from the Torre de Homenage, at the foot of which the ill-fated Don Luis Lacy was shot in 1817, 'a victim to his ardent love of liberty.'

Other drives may be taken in among the hills to Ben Dinat, a château in the midst of fascinating scenery, belonging to the Count of Montenegro; and westwards to the fishing village of Andraix. A longer excursion may be made to Soller, by way of Valldemosa, in the monastery of which George Sand wrote *Spiridion*, when on a visit with Chopin in the bitterly cold winter of 1838. The clergy of Soller would have nothing to say to the visitors; nobody would wait upon them, and they consequently had a wretched time of it. Valldemosa is a two hours' drive from Palma across a plain studded with almond, walnut, and olive trees. The village itself—Wilayet-moosa, or 'the village of Musa'—lies in a romantic situation among hills, and is a weather-beaten old place, chiefly interesting for the palatial edifice that in 1393 was turned by Pope Martin IV. into a Carthusian monastery, and is now occupied by several families, who let out delightful summer quarters on very moderate terms. In the (modern) ballroom there is a curious painting by Ankerman, a native of Mallorca, in which the artist is represented as being called to order by a burly British beadle in Greenwich Park on a Sunday, while a troop of jeering *va-nu-pieds* or ragamuffins are looking on.

Half an hour's drive beyond Valldemosa lies Miramar, the beauty-spot, *par excellence*, of the island. The small château (which gives its name to the stately one built by Maximilian near Trieste) stands on an estate belonging to the Austrian Archduke Luis Salvator, the son of a Grand-duke of Tuscany, who has erected an *ospederia* for travellers. For three days, lodging and attendance are free to all comers, but food must be brought. The house is on rising ground, overlooking a coast-line of rare beauty, and is environed by richly cultivated terraced gardens and vineyards. Within a few minutes' walk stands a miniature church; and near at hand is the château, which once formed part of a college built by Lully for the Oriental studies of his monks, and where he set up one of the earliest printing-presses in Europe. The royal owner is an accomplished scholar and archæologist, and is the author of a sumptuous volume entitled *Die Balearen in Wort und Bild*, or 'The Balearics described with Pen and Pencil.'

From Valldemosa the road runs on down to palmy Soller (so called from *olla*, a jar), which, though sadly dilapidated, is, to my thinking, one of the most beautiful places in the Mediterranean. It lies in a valley, bathed in sunshine from dawn to sunset, and knows the breath neither of *bora* nor *mistral*. For those who do not mind roughing it a bit, Soller is delightful, though, as a mere accumulation of old bridges, crumbling walls, and crazy-looking dwellings, it has nothing but its romantic situation and its exquisite climate to make it attractive. A couple of miles away to the west lies a pretty inlet, into which the sea flows through a narrow *bocca*, with a lighthouse and ruined chapel on either hand. In spring-time the road between Soller and its little port is occupied for the most part by strings of carts laden with oranges, and drawn by tall shapely Mallorcan donkeys, a hardy and fiery race, that work week in week out for five-and-twenty years. Fifty million oranges are shipped annually from Soller, besides vast numbers of *Citron medica*.

Much remains that might be written of Iviza and Minorca, and Arta with its wonderful cyclopean monuments and fantastic limestone caves; and Belpuig with its inexplicable *talayot*, a circle of colossal stones, possibly an ancient place of sacrifice. In the Balearics the antiquary and the student of history, no less than the lotos-eater and the lover of Nature, will find abundant matter for delight; and holiday-makers in search of new sensations may rest assured that they will get their money's worth and a good deal more into the bargain, if they wend their way, either in summer or winter, to the little rocky archipelago for which a bi-weekly steamer sails from Barcelona, and which is to many a travelled Englishman still an entirely unknown playground.

HAWKS AS FRUIT-WATCHERS.

> I have a fine hawk for the bush.
>
> SHAKESPEARE.

WITH the return of the fruit season, gardeners and orchardists will find themselves once more face to face with the problem, how at the smallest outlay to protect their fruit from the ravages of various birds which prey upon it. Of late years, these have increased so excessively in many districts as to become little short of a plague. As soon as the fruit begins to colour, they flock to it from the neighbouring woodlands, and from early morn till late they swarm among the bushes, devouring and wasting the produce, so that as each crop—cherry, strawberry, gooseberry, currant, plum, and pear—matures they exact a heavy tithe from the patient cultivator. All means yet devised to prevent or lessen their depredations have proved only partially successful, and more or less objectionable. In fact, to carry any one of them out would require no inconsiderable expenditure in meeting the wages of watchers and in providing the necessary appliances. Where the plot is small and profit is no object, protection can be obtained by netting it in; but where the area is of any extent, it is hopeless to think of so doing. The small returns which fruit of late has yielded does not leave a margin to provide so costly an expedient—never to mention the difficulty of spreading nets over trees of various heights, and the constant attention required to keep them in anything like serviceable order. To resolve to shoot the birds is to undertake a labour that is vain, for, in place of the one which is shot, half-a-dozen seem to appear. Moreover, in a very short time they get accustomed to the report of the gun, as they do to all those hideous noises, the deafening echoes of which at intervals are heard reverberating through orchards—only to develop a deeper cunning and a more reckless daring.

Catching in iron spring traps, and leaving the victims with broken legs to die a death of slow agony, or mutilating the hapless ones which have been caught by other means before setting them free, must be condemned as barbarous savagery, which fails of any good. Again, robbing all nests and destroying the old birds is cruel folly, for blackbirds, thrushes, and ring-ousels—the chief depredators—perform a useful service in clearing gardens and orchards of certain insect pests. Further, all these birds are pleasant songsters: their sweet mellow notes lend an interest to and gladden the landscape, sweetening the too often chilly breezes of spring; and it is the duty of all well-intentioned persons to preserve in this utilitarian age every beast, bird, and plant which gives a pleasure and a charm to rural life.

It would thus appear as if fruit-growers had not yet considered this matter of protecting their orchards in its proper bearing. The idea is too prevalent that thrushes and blackbirds are garden pests, and nothing else, and that just as the gamekeeper kills all birds of prey, so the orchardist ought to destroy all fruit-eating birds. But how brief is their term of mischief-doing, compared with that of beneficence! Only during a short time in summer are thrushes and blackbirds troublesome. All through the other months they are busy among the slugs, larvæ, and other injurious creatures. Only when the rich treasures of the orchard are ripe for gathering is their usefulness changed into destructiveness, and then the gardener, irritated at the pillage of his berries, forgets their past services, and vows a war of extermination against the songsters, which in spring-time gladdened his ear as they carolled their love-notes from the branches of some pink-robed apple-tree, and whose visits to his rows and borders he welcomed in early summer.

Clearly what is needed is some means—simple and inexpensive—whereby the birds may be kept away during the fruit harvest without necessarily in any material way lessening their numbers. Nature provides such a means ready at hand, and man best shows his wisdom by following her guidance and using her remedy.

In early ages, when men became tillers of the ground, they found that their grain when stored was eaten by mice. Observation taught them that mice in turn are eaten by other animals; and so, to keep the mice away from their granaries, they tamed the ancestors of our domestic cat. Hawks are the natural enemies of thrushes, blackbirds, and ousels, as cats are of mice. The most unobservant cannot but have noted what a commotion and panic take place among birds if a hawk be espied gliding past. The swift-winged swallows and starlings dart hither and thither, following their foe at a respectful distance; the thrushes, and finches, and sparrows seek the protecting cover of the underwood or the heart of the hedgerow, while each and all screech and scream, sounding a note of alarm, it may be a cry which is intended to mock the hawk, making it aware that its game of swoops and surprises is a failure for once, as there is no small bird napping. Why should not, then, this dread which our fruit-eating birds have of their natural enemy, be turned to serviceable account, and the hawk be installed as the guardian of the orchard, as the cat is the protectress of the granary?

If it be thought that this plan is too simple to be of any real service, or impracticable because of the difficulty likely to be experienced in making so wild a bird as the hawk tame enough to abide near a house and its neighbourhood, the writer may be permitted to give his testimony to the facility with which certain hawks are made as docile as spaniels, and to the good services which they render in warding off birds from fruit. Of the four hawks which are more or less common in our midst—the peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*), the merlin (*Falco æsalon*), the sparrow-hawk (*Accipiter nisus*), and the kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)—the three latter he has himself frequently reared and used to protect fruit, and the former he has seen trained by another. To be successful, the young must be taken from the nest before they are many days old, and kept warm, and fed on the flesh of rabbit or young rook moistened with water, all bones being finely broken. It is well to accustom them from the first to some sound or whistle, so that when they begin to take wing they may come on being called. As soon as they can move about, place them on the ground in the fruit enclosure, for a choice near where you are working, and occasionally give them some titbit, thus inviting them to frequent your society. At night they should be confined, and in the morning fed before being set free, and on no account ought they to be encouraged to hunt for themselves. Once they are fledged, a few scraps of odd lean butcher-meat, with an occasional change to rabbit or mouse, will keep them in good health. If you are so fortunate as to live near a peregrine's eyrie and can procure a young one, do so. Noble bird as it was once accounted, it will guard your fruit splendidly, and be the envy of every one around who loves the romance of our ancient field-sports. A tame one which the writer remembers did excellent service in this way. A peregrine, however, has this disadvantage—being a bird of powerful flight, it is apt, unless carefully tended and confined when not required, to wander wide, and as every hawk which comes within gunshot is a dead bird, it may never return.

A hawk which cannot be recommended is the sparrow-hawk. It is difficult to tame sufficiently. A pair which the writer reared from the egg, and which in confinement were as gentle as kittens, became, the moment they were put outside, as 'wild as haggards of the rock.'

The two hawks eminently qualified to become garden watchers are the merlin and the kestrel. The merlin is the smallest of our native hawks, being a miniature peregrine, the cock being little larger than a missel-thrush. It generally nests among heather, and for spirit and daring it has no compeer. In the days of falconry they were considered 'passing good hawks and very skilful.' The young are easily reared and trained. When fledged, they are active and restless, their habits being quite ideal for the purpose of dispersing the birds which are ever on the watch for a chance of attacking the fruit, while their small size permits their working easily among bushes. When on the wing, they rival the swallow in speed. A young hen which the writer kept was once found when about ten weeks old with a swift—newly killed—in her talons.

But the hawk which will be most easily obtained is the kestrel. It may be no match for the merlin in activity or daring, but its presence is quite effective enough in the orchard. Its graceful hovering movements when on the wing, and its partly insectivorous habits, commend it. For several seasons the writer reared one of these hawks, and found they had a sufficiently deterrent effect in keeping away all birds from a large garden. No blackbird or thrush dared to intrude while its foe was near, and thus the hawk more than repaid the small trouble incurred in rearing and handling it, being in addition an interesting pet.

It may be suggested that where there are a number of small holders, the occupiers might arrange to keep a hawk among them, as a well-trained bird is capable of guarding several acres. Another service which it could perform would be preserving the bushes in early spring—if necessary—from the attacks of birds such as bullfinches or titmice, which destroy the fruit-bud, either by eating or cutting it off to get at the insect forms within its folds.

A word of advice is necessary. Unfortunately, the hawk, being an Ishmael, has enemies—no feathered creature has more. No one yields it mercy; no one loses a chance of robbing its nest, of killing its young, of shooting or trapping itself; no close-time is allowed it. If, therefore, you keep one, let the fact be known widely that your garden or orchard is guarded by a hawk; that you value its services as highly as the shepherd does his dog's; else just at the time you require it most, you may discover that some urchin has stoned it to death, or a gamekeeper, not knowing its usefulness, has shot it.

If fruit-farmers can be induced to act upon this suggestion, a brighter era will begin for some of our much-persecuted Raptores. Their purpose in the economy of nature will be better understood and appreciated, and it will be recognised that they have a place in the order of creation wisely assigned to them, and that they can be utilised to render very valuable services to the cultivator of the fruits of the earth.

THE UPHILL AND THE DOWNHILL.

'Scilicet omnibus est labor impendendus.'

Strode a lordling from his palace
On the hillside's stately crest,
Pacing downward to the valleys
In enjoyment's idle quest;
But the breeze about him blowing
Seemed to murmur on his track,
'Ah, the road that's downhill going
Will be uphill coming back.'

Tripped a maiden to the fountain
From her cottage in the vale,
Stepping boldly up the mountain
With her empty water-pail;
And methought the brooklet flowing
Whispered ever on her track,
'Oh, the road that's uphill going
Will be downhill coming back.'

And a lesson I did borrow,
As of some chance-opened book,
From the breeze's murmured sorrow
And the whisper of the brook—
If the downhill has an ending,
Choose our pathway as we will,
We had best begin ascending
With our faces to the hill.

H. C. O.

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CASTLE DANGEROUS.

'For a lesson in the romance of landscape and of history, I do not know any place in the three kingdoms where we could learn more than on this bit of road.' So wrote an Edinburgh Professor after driving across Crawford Moor, along Telford's Glasgow and Carlisle road, from Abington on the Clyde to the town of Douglas in Lanarkshire. In that adventurous journey of 1803, William and Dora Wordsworth came down from Leadhills in their curious horse-car, and also crossed the Moor from the south, and rested at Douglas Mill Inn. Dora Wordsworth records a wonderful exaltation of feeling as they left the lonely mining village of Wanlockhead, crossed Duneaton Water, and approached Crawford-John. She seems never to have been happier than when alone, inhaling the brisk air of the Moor; while her poet-brother led his horse on in front, along the alternately steep and winding roads.

Scott was also at Douglas Mill Inn—long since removed—in the decadence of his powers, during the summer of 1831. It is extremely pathetic to read the account of Scott's journey thither from Abbotsford. Somewhat distrustful of his own powers of recollection, he wished again to see Douglasdale and St Bride's Church, to verify the scenery, and setting and surroundings, of his new story, *Castle Dangerous*, part of which was in type. On the 18th of July, Scott and Lockhart started from Abbotsford, passing Yair, Ashiesteel, Innerleithen, and Peebles. Driving on by Neidpath, and passing up the vale of Lyne, Scott seems to have been moved at the sight of the ruin of the gigantic and unfinished Drochel Castle, begun by Regent Morton. Biggar was reached at sunset, and horses were changed for the next stage to Douglas Mill Inn, where they remained overnight. On the journey, Scott seemed to be setting tasks to his memory, and was pleased when he could remember his favourite passages. A mile beyond Biggar, Scott reproved a carter for lashing his horse, and later, gave alms to an old soldier.

Next day, under the guidance of Mr Haddow, one of the tenants of Lord Douglas, the Castle of Douglas, the village, and St Bride's Church were visited. In St Bride's, says Lockhart, 'that works of sculpture equal to any of the fourteenth century in Westminster Abbey (for such they certainly were, though much mutilated by Cromwell's soldiery), should be found in so remote an inland place, attests strikingly the boundless resources of those haughty lords, "whose coronet," as Scott says, "so often counterpoised the Crown." The effigy of the best friend of Bruce is among the number, and represents him cross-legged, as having fallen in battle with the Saracen, when on his way to Jerusalem with the heart of his king.' According to the parish minister, Lockhart is incorrect in blaming Cromwell's soldiery for the mutilations in St Bride's. There is a much simpler reason. During the absence of one of the Lords of Douglas from the Castle, the school children took their will of the place, running out and in, doing damage by stone-throwing and otherwise to the monuments.

The crypt where the Douglases had buried for centuries was also examined by Scott and Lockhart. The leaden coffins were piled round the walls, until the lower ones were pressed as flat as sheets of pasteboard. The floor was covered with others of a more modern date. The silver case (?) which contained the heart of good Sir James Douglas was also pointed out. Scott studied the fragment of the old Castle, which closely adjoins the modern Castle, 'drawing outlines on the turf, and arranging in his fancy the sweep of the old precincts.' Before the adjoining lake and morass (now a beautiful ornamental lake with swans and wild-duck) was drained, Lockhart thinks the Castle must have been a perfect model of solitary strength. It is hardly so from its position, which is not very commanding.

Scott noted in his Journal at the end of January 1832 that both *Castle Dangerous* and

Count Robert of Paris, neither of which he had thought sea-worthy, 'have performed two voyages and sold 3400—as yet, my spell holds fast.' And still he thought the public mad for giving these volumes such a good reception. The story of *Castle Dangerous*, as Andrew Lang says, is not one to criticise; yet no one visiting Douglas can fail to read it with interest and profit, as the setting and surroundings are given with much of the old power, vividness, and accuracy. An Introduction to *Castle Dangerous* was only forwarded from Naples in February 1832, in time for a second edition. As Mr Lang says, among his gifts to men, the most glorious is Scott's example. If these lines at the head of Chapter XIV. are the last which Scott ever wrote, like this last journey to Douglas for information and verification of the setting of his romance, there is an added pathos between the lines as we read:

> The way is long, my children, long and rough—
> The moors are dreary, and the woods are dark;
> But he that creeps from cradle on to grave
> Unskilled save in the velvet course of fortune,
> Hath missed the discipline of noble hearts.

Save in the matter of the preface to his novel, Scott does not appear to have further utilised his visit to Douglas.

The town of Douglas is a queer irregular place, with its High Street in its lowest part; Main Street looks anything but like its name, and as to order or regularity, the houses might have come from the skies in a hail-storm. One naturally turns first to the remains of St Bride's Church, on a knoll in the heart of the town, overlooking Douglas Water. Only a portion of the spire and aisle remains. Thither the Douglases came when they meant to swear an oath and never go back, and there these mighty lords have slept in peace for generations. When restored in ·1879–81, the vault below the high-altar was renewed and enlarged, and some of the old coffins were removed. Although the bones of the good Sir James Douglas, who died in Spain in 1330, when on his way with Bruce's heart to Jerusalem, are said to be laid here, when the space under his effigy was opened, no remains were found. The lettered tablets in the chapel tell us that the remains of Archibald, fifth Earl of Angus (Bell the Cat) are here also; but one becomes strongly conscious of the modern element in two stained glass windows to the eleventh and twelfth Earls, and the huge marble sarcophagus by Boehm, of five tons or so, over the last resting-place of Lady Elizabeth Douglas, of Douglas, mother of the Earl of Home, the present representative of the House of Douglas. The effigy is of rich red marble, while the face, beautifully sculptured, is of alabaster. One has only to look at this beautiful tomb, and again at the battered effigy of the good Sir James, to feel the distance between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries. Did one of these heart-shaped cases beside the tombs really contain the heart of good Sir James? So we are told. When the old vault below got too crowded, it was abandoned for a time, for one under the present parish church.

The present 'Sun' inn, to the south of St Bride's, was once the town prison, and in the stone-room, in an upper storey, the head and hands of Richard Cameron were deposited by the dragoons when on their way from the skirmish at Aird's Moss to Edinburgh. In the prison chamber below, Hackstoun of Rathillet was confined with his sore-wounded head, soon to be lost on the scaffold. The execution of Hackstoun seems to have been accompanied with the most barbarous cruelty. The head and hands of Cameron were fixed on the Netherbow Port, Edinburgh, and were handed over with the explanation: 'These are the head and hands of a man who lived praying and preaching, and who died praying and fighting.' When the eldest son of the Marquis of Douglas, James, Earl of Angus, threw in his lot with the Revolution, eighty men, the flower of the West country, joined him, and formed the 26th or Cameronian Regiment, which, under Colonel Cleland at Dunkeld, held their own against the victorious Highlanders from Killiecrankie. The first review of these men was held in the haugh below St Bride's Church, beside Douglas Water; and now a fine monument by Brock crowns a height above, to James, Earl of Angus, who was killed at Steinkirk while in command of the Cameronian Regiment in 1692. This monument was erected on the two hundredth anniversary of the raising of this Cameronian Regiment.

It is a privilege on this fine morning to wander down the avenue towards Douglas Castle. The old morass which helped to make Castle Perilous secure has been transformed into an ornamental lake. A fine glimpse of Douglas Water flowing toward the Clyde, and of the spacious park, is to be had below the only remaining fragment of the ivy-clad tower of Castle Dangerous. It immediately adjoins the modern castle, on the eastward. Some splendid Highland cattle winking and chewing the cud, below the fine old trees, seem quite in harmony with their surroundings.

The ancient Castle of Douglas, burnt in 1760, was succeeded by Adam's strong and elegant building of between fifty and sixty rooms. The dining-room is forty and a half feet long, twenty-five feet broad, and eighteen feet high, with a rich ceiling. There is a fine hanging stair of freestone, veined and clouded like marble. Only one wing, or two-fifths of the original plan, has been carried out. The most interesting relic here is a sword said to have been presented by King Robert the Bruce, on his death-bed, to good Sir James Douglas. It was carried off by the Jacobite troops in 1745, but afterwards recovered. The Earl of Home seems to divide his attention in the autumn between this place and the Hirsel, at Coldstream, with its unrivalled stretch of salmon-fishing on the Tweed.

The story of how the good Sir James Douglas punished the English intruder who had taken his castle belongs to history, and is given anew in Scott's preface to *Castle Dangerous*. It was called *Castle of Danger*, because of the constant peril in which the English governors lived who held it. The manner of retaking it is very picturesquely told by Hume of Godscroft, and should be read by every visitor. The patriotism and further vicissitudes of the House of Douglas are set down in great detail in Sir W. Fraser's *Douglas Book* (4 volumes, 1883).

Douglas seems to have fallen away as a place of business. It lies three miles from its station on a branch line of the Caledonian Railway. We trust an old writer is now wrong in the statement that 'it were difficult to find a village of equal proportions so destitute of genteel or respectable society.' This is a fine vale for the visitor: the Douglas Water, rising at the foot of Cairntable, nine miles above the town, joins the Clyde seven miles below, and everywhere affords good views. Hazelside, identified with the Dicksons, and which figures in *Castle Dangerous*, lies close to the town on the west side; while Priesthill, where Clavers shot John Brown, lies ten miles away in the same direction.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XI.—BLACK DARKNESS.

'HANG it all! What is it now?' cried Brant, as the door of his uncle's room was opened. 'This makes four—— Oh, it's you, Hamber. I'm busy.—Well, what is it?'

'Sorry to interrupt you, sir,' said the old clerk; 'but Mr Wynyan is out on business.'

'Mr Wynyan seems to be always out on business,' cried Brant, as Hamber sniffed involuntarily, and thought that his chief would not like his room to smell so strongly of tobacco in office hours.

'Yes, sir; he is a great deal out on business,' said the old man. 'Most valuable gentleman, sir: he gets through an enormous amount of work. He makes me stare sometimes.'

'Bah!' ejaculated Brant.—'Well, what is it?'

'There are some papers, sir, that require to be signed, and as Mr Wynyan may not be back for some hours, I felt that it would be best to come and consult you'——

'Why, of course,' said Brant sharply.

'Whether it would not be the safest thing to send one of the clerks down to Brighton, so that Mr Dalton could sign them this afternoon.'

'Here! what papers are they?'

'Estimates, sir, and of great importance.'

'No occasion to send down there and disturb him. Where are they? I'll sign them.'

'I beg your pardon, sir.'

'Are you getting deaf, Hamber?'

'Oh no, sir; I hope not.'

'You seem like it. I said I would sign the papers.'

'Yes, sir, I heard you say that; but'——

'Don't stand butting, man, but bring the deeds, or whatever they are, and I'll sign.'

'But really, sir, I beg your pardon—it would not be in order.'

'I'm the best judge of that, sir.'

'But I'm quite sure that Mr Dalton would not like any one except himself to sign documents of so much importance.'

'Confound it all, Hamber! are you left in charge of this place or am I?'

'Well, sir, you are, of course, and Mr Wynyan,' said the old man apologetically.

Brant said something under his breath respecting his colleague, and something above it respecting Hamber.

'You are a finicking old muddler, Hamber. Go and fetch the papers, and I'll sign them.'

The old clerk shrugged his shoulders, went out, and returned with the documents; upon which Brant dashed off his signature in three places.

'There: the same name.—Now, be off, and see that I am not disturbed again. I have some very important letters to write. You understand?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Not to be disturbed until I ring.'

The old clerk bowed and went out; and as soon as he had closed the second door, Brant rose and set free a catch which secured him from interruption save by any one possessing the little Bramah latchkey.

'This will not do; this will not do,' muttered the old man, returning to his table, and shaking his head over the signatures. 'I dare not send them away. Trouble must come of it when Mr Dalton knows. I cannot send them away.'

He refolded the papers, and placed them in a drawer, to wait until Wynyan's return, that gentleman having gone on to the works over in Lambeth to inspect a model being made in accordance with his instructions.

Then the old clerk glanced at the baize door, and sniffed once more, fancying that a great odour of tobacco smoke was stealing out through the cracks at the side.

'So very unprofessional,' he said sadly. 'I wonder what he is doing? Business letters, I suppose. Signing these papers, too, as if he were already head of the business. Heaven forbid that he should be, for I could never stay.—Poor Mr Dalton!' he sighed, raising his hand to his eyes, and letting his elbow rest upon the table. 'I could never stay here if he were gone.'

There was a quick movement about him; but the old man heard nothing, for his thoughts were down at Brighton with his old employer, whom he venerated, and looked upon as the greatest man that ever lived.

There were a few eager ejaculations; but old Hamber did not stir till a hand was laid upon his shoulder.

'Asleep, Hamber?'

The old clerk started back in his chair, gazing wildly at the speaker's face. Then he snatched at the extended hand, which he caught in both of his, and muttered: 'Thank God!'

'Back, you see, and better,' said Dalton, smiling sadly down at his old servant. 'Where is Mr Wynyan?'

'Over at the works, sir.'

'That's right. And Mr Brant?'

'In your room, sir.'

Dalton nodded, went over to the baize door, and, quite from force of habit, took out his little latchkey, opened it, and passed in, letting it fall-to behind him after fastening the catch.

The next moment he turned the handle of the inner door, pressed it open, and was about to pass in, but stopped short, nailed to the spot by what he saw. He had entered silently; and

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Brant, who was seated with his back to him, was too intent upon his task to notice the entrance.

One glance was sufficient to show what that task was; for, as Dalton stopped short, with his heart beginning to beat heavily, Brant raised and slightly altered the position of a broad drawing-board, pinned down upon which was a careful tracing of the drawings of the great motor, beside which, in the full light of the window, the young man was holding the original, and comparing it bit by bit, to make sure that every part was a perfect rendering. Suddenly he stopped, and, taking a pen from his lips, he touched up and made clearer a letter or two; and all the time, with his face white from suppressed passion, and one hand resting upon his breast, Dalton stood motionless, seeing the carefully hoarded and worked-out treasure, the building up of two toiling brains, filched away beneath his eyes.

For a few moments a mist rose between them, but it passed away, and there were the drawings with all the foldings standing out clear and bright beside the tracing, the vile forgery and theft prepared by one whom he had been trying so hard to trust and start afresh in his career.

It seemed maddening, and the old man tried hard to persuade himself that he was wrong—that it was some illusion—that anxiety about the invention had affected his brain, and was playing some fantastic trick conjuring up a scene which would directly fade away. But he knew that it was all true, as he stood frowning there, waiting, so that he might have the fullest assurance of his nephew's guilt before he spoke.

And still Brant worked on for some minutes hurriedly but carefully, with an intentness his uncle had never seen before. But there was no doubt why this was done. It all flashed through the old engineer's brain at the first moment. Such things had been done before; he had found out that a young clerk had been bribed into copying some plans—a trivial matter that. This was his *magnum opus*, Wynyan's invention more than his own, and the hot wrath came bubbling up in his veins, making him clench his fist as if to strike.

While there, in the bright sunshine, a flower in his button-hole, and dressed in the height of fashion, the culprit worked on, till, apparently satisfied with the result of his careful comparison, he let the original fall back over the table, took up a penknife, and carefully raised the flat-headed drawing-pins one by one, till the delicate tracing linen was free from the board, and he rose up straight, and half-turned with a smile of triumph upon his face.

The next moment his jaw dropped; he looked ten years older; and had Dalton wanted further proof of his nephew's guilt, there it was in his hurried act. For, starting back as he met his uncle's eye, he began, with trembling hands, to rapidly fold the tracing, the unstretched linen falling rapidly back in the creases made doubtless time after time, while, battling with his emotions, Dalton stood there speechless, knowing that he must control himself for his own sake.

After a terrible silence, broken only by the sound of the traffic without, the words came in a strained, unnatural tone.

'Will you explain, sir, why you have copied these drawings?'

'Well, uncle, I—er—I thought it would give me a better insight into the contrivance, so that I might hold my own over it, and be of some assistance,' stammered Brant.

'Liar!' cried Dalton in a loud, angry whisper, which sounded terrible from the suppressed wrath.

'Uncle!'

'I said liar, sir. Contemptible, mean scoundrel and liar! Why, you haven't the decent spirit in you of an ordinary rascal, or, when found out, you would have been defiant.'

'You don't know what you are saying, sir,' said Brant. 'Really, I'——

'I do know, boy. Your miserable white face and shrinking eyes were quite enough to show me the truth—that I have a wretched scoundrel and traitor in the camp. You are stealing those secrets to try and make money of them. Robbing your benefactor, and the man who has had the largest share in their invention.'

'I will not stay here and be talked to like this,' said Brant hotly.

'Move a step from where you are standing till you have heard all I have to say, and though you are my nephew, I'll ring for the police and charge you as a thief,' whispered Dalton.

Brant looked at him wildly, and stood with one hand resting upon the table, trembling like a leaf.

'Yes,' continued the old man, speaking in the same low husky whisper, 'you are a coward and a thief, a robber of your benefactor. For who were you, sir, save my brother's child, that I should have burdened myself with you, and given you a handsome income for your uselessness?'

'Oh, this is too much,' cried Brant, with an effort to make a show of indignation.

'Not half what you deserve, sir; and you shall now have the hardest lashes my tongue can give. Perhaps you will not feel them now; but some day they will come home, for you cannot be all bad: you must have some heart.'

'Oh, I have heart enough, if I'm treated properly,' said Brant in a bullying tone.

'I have not found it so, boy: but listen. Stricken down as I was by illness, I did feel something of reproach, and was ready to excuse you on account of your disappointment about Rénée, and in seeing a far more able man gradually succeeding to the position you ought to have occupied.'

'Yes: the position I ought to have occupied,' said Brant.

'Feeling this, and that I might have been a little too stern to my brother's son, I said to myself that I would look over the past, and try again with you.'

'In what way?' said Brant sneeringly, for he saw that the passion shown was giving place to sorrow.

'I showed you, sir. When I left, I placed you partly in charge of this great business.

Then, feeling that my time could not be long here, I began one of a series of settlements I meant to make, and I said the first should be with regard to you, the greatest sinner against me that I have had.'

Brant turned livid now as the old man went on.

'I said to myself: he is of my own blood, and the past shall be wiped out. He shall begin again.'

'I want to begin again, uncle,' faltered Brant.

'As a thief,' said the old man contemptuously, 'when I find you robbing me.'

'No, uncle; you take too hard a view of what I am doing. Really, I told you the truth.'

'I take the true view, sir,' said the old man. 'Listen. I came up here this morning feeling better, and determined to have it out with you. "He can't begin a fresh life," I said, "with a load of debt upon his back. He shall tell me frankly every penny he owes, and if it's ten thousand pounds, I'll pay all, and he shall start with a clean slate." Now I came here open-handed, ready to take yours, and I find that you are as vile a scoundrel as ever breathed.'

'But, uncle, you will not hear me; I'——

'No; I will not hear you,' cried the old man fiercely, and snatching up the plans lying upon the table, he quickly folded them together. 'Now, give me that copy—that vile forgery you have made.'

'What copy?' said Brant surlily.

'That which I saw you button up in your pocket.'

'You are all wrong, sir.'

'I am right, boy. I stood watching you for minutes before you guiltily felt my presence. Give me that copy, I say.'

'I have no copy. If I had, it's mine.'

'Am I to drag it from you, then?' cried Dalton, in a fierce low voice. 'Give it to me, dog, before I call in help, and expose your shame to the clerks in the office.'

'I have no copy,' said Brant huskily. 'What are you talking about? It was your fancy.'

The words had hardly left his lips before Dalton seized him by the breast, and made an attempt to drag open the coat which covered the tracings. But he had over-rated his strength.

With one wrench Brant swung him round, and thrust him backward helpless into a chair, rushed to the door, turned and saw the old man lying back helpless, and staring wildly at him.

Then, opening the doors quickly, he passed out through both, closed them, and assumed a nonchalant air. Expecting moment by moment to hear his uncle's voice, he went deliberately to his own room, took his hat and went out, passing Wynyan in the hall, and giving him a furious look.

The next minute he had sprung into a cab, and given the man the order to drive to St James's Square, sitting back the while with one hand thrust into his breast grasping the drawings, to gain which he had sacrificed everything, determined now to go on to the bitter end and drive the nefarious bargain home.

'It was his own fault,' he kept on saying to himself—'his own fault. I wanted to be square. I showed it again and again. His own fault. If he had only spoken sooner he might have saved it. Now, it is too late.'

UNITED STATES NORTH ATLANTIC PILOT CHART.

Navigators of the wide world's merchant navies are deeply grateful to the United States Hydrographic Office at Washington for the valuable information with respect to maritime matters that is issued at regular intervals by that busy branch of the American Bureau of Navigation for the purpose of insuring the greatest possible safety to life and property on the waste of waters. A shipmaster who ventured to rely solely upon his own experience, albeit of a lifetime, would often be found wanting. No matter how carefully a hydrographical survey is made, the officers occupied in this work will scarcely claim that the resulting chart is likely to hold good for all time. Rocks have a nasty knack of cropping up just where least expected; coral reefs are continually in course of formation in certain parts of old Ocean; and finality is denied to the indispensable work of nautical surveyors. Winds and sea surface-currents are perchance scarcely so important, in this age of steam and the screw propeller, as they were half a century earlier. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that winds and currents are utterly ignored by navigators of steamships. Derelict ships, icebergs, and other drifting dangers, are a menace to safe navigation, and seafarers naturally yearn to possess the latest reliable reports relative thereto.

The British Hydrographic Office, having at disposal several specially fitted-out surveying ships, and a technical staff at the Admiralty second to none, is easily first in the production of navigating charts, enabling mariners to keep clear of 'merchant-marring rocks,' sandbanks, and similar dangers, existing around every coast, and also in deeper water. In marine meteorology, however, the United States has always been in the van. Prior to the advent of the illustrious Maury, very little was known as to the particular parts of the several oceans where navigators might expect the most favourable winds and following currents. Vague ideas prevailed until Maury was appointed Superintendent of the United States Naval Depôt and Observatory in 1844, and evolved order out of chaos. That renowned American seaman devoted every energy to determining the shortest possible routes for sailing-ships. He coaxed navigators to co-operate with him by recording atmospherical phenomena and items of natural history in logbooks, and forwarding the observations to Washington. Assisted by a competent staff of United States Navy officers, Maury drew up charts showing at a glance the boundaries and characteristics of ocean winds and currents; the best tracks for sailing-vessels; the limits of fog, field-ice, icebergs, rain, and whalefood; together with other data of interest to merchants and navigators. Neither before nor since has anything so valuable in marine meteorology been made public. Passages have never been shortened to such an extent, consequent on the marshalling of facts obtained from ships' logbooks. Redfield and Piddington achieved much in clearing up the haze that obscured the Law of Storms; but Maury surpassed all other workers in the wide domain of marine meteorology. His daughter, Mrs Corbyn, in a biography of her father, written with filial affection in 1888, has indicated wherein his scientific strength lay. He always endeavoured 'to keep the mind unbiased by theories and speculations; never to have any wish that an investigation should result in favour of this view in preference to that; and never to attempt by premature speculation to anticipate the results of investigations, but always to trust to the investigations themselves.' So highly was his work esteemed, both by merchants and scientists, that the commercial community of New York presented him with five thousand dollars in gold and a handsome service of silver; while the various learned Societies scattered over Europe and America vied with each other in making him an honorary member.

His mantle fell upon worthy shoulders, and his successors have always acted up to the best traditions of the nautical profession. In December 1883 the United States Hydrographic Office commenced the issue of a monthly guide for navigators—the Pilot Chart of the North Atlantic Ocean—which is now eagerly sought after and consulted continually by mariners under every flag. Its practical utility has been proved up to the hilt, and each month's issue is an improvement upon its predecessor. Captain H. Parsell, R.N.R., of the ocean greyhound *Majestic*, giving evidence before the Committee on Floating Derelicts, said with respect to the American Pilot Chart: 'I always have that chart before me when returning and sailing over the ocean. I take that chart, and I consider that it is a very great guide, and an exceedingly great advantage to me. It tells me the limits of fog reported, every derelict on the ocean, and almost every iceberg seen.' This opinion, from one of the most experienced commanders in the Atlantic trade, is fully borne out by many other navigators. No higher testimony is necessary. Reports of marine meteorology are regularly received at the Washington Hydrographic Office from voluntary observers in war-ships and carrying-craft of all nationalities; from keepers of life-saving stations along the American coast from Labrador to Mexico; and from various other sources. The actual number of observers afloat is now about three thousand; and on shore there are over three hundred. The information thus obtained is placed in geographical position on daily synoptic charts, and no fewer than five hundred reports relative to the North Atlantic are received every day. Ships under the British flag earnestly co-operate with the Washington authorities in this good work. At Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Norfolk, Savannah, New Orleans, San Francisco, Portland, Port Townsend, Chicago, and Cleveland, there are branch hydrographic offices presided over by officers of the United States Navy, in close touch not only with seafarers, but also with the central office at Washington. Those on the Great Lakes have only just been opened; and the public spirit of the citizens of Chicago and Cleveland is worthy of mention in this connection. The Masonic Temple Association of Chicago granted the branch office of that city free quarters, the annual rental of which would have been three hundred and sixty pounds, and also erected on the building a time-ball costing two hundred and eighty pounds. In return for this valuable concession, the Association merely required that the time-ball should be operated by the branch officials. Cleveland has acted similarly.

During the financial year ended June 30, 1894, nearly seven thousand five hundred vessels in the several ports above mentioned were visited by the staff; twenty-five thousand Pilot Charts and two thousand seven hundred Supplements thereto were freely distributed. Shipmasters visiting the above-mentioned American ports are always gladly welcomed at the branch offices, and ungrudgingly furnished with every necessary item of nautical information. The United States Hydrographic Office is, as it were, the Intelligence Department of the world's mercantile marine; and masters of our largest liners, of the less palatial, but equally necessary cargo-boats, and of sailing-ships, seldom omit a visit to the branch office, taking with them the observations recorded during the passage. This facility for obtaining information is becoming every day more precious to those that go down to the sea in ships. Not infrequently a five-thousand-ton steamer reaches port with a full cargo, discharges, reloads, and sails again within three days! Hence the necessity for a ready reference such as is afforded by the United States Pilot Charts, Hydrographical Bulletins, or a visit to a branch office. Shipmasters, either directly, or assisted by their officers, carefully record, on forms furnished for that purpose, information relative to trade-winds, ice, fogs, wrecks, drifting buoys, storms, whales, barometric pressure, temperature of air and sea, the use of oil as a sea-smoother, waterspouts, ocean currents, routes of sailing-ships and steamers, deep-sea soundings, auroras, thunder-storms, electric phenomena, and general items of ocean weather. These filled-up forms are either handed in at one of the branch hydrographic offices, or forwarded by post to the Hydrographer at Washington. In either case, they are courteously acknowledged to the senders, and the data immediately placed in geographical position on the daily synoptic charts from which the monthly Pilot Charts are prepared.

For convenience of reference, the Pilot Charts are printed in three colours. The black framework is merely a Mercator chart, by seamen preferred to all others for navigating purposes; the blue data comprise weather forecasts and routes for the ensuing month, compiled from the accumulated experience of many masters in previous years; and the red text, placed on the chart only one day prior to publication, is a concise yet clear review of the previous month's weather, storm-tracks, fog limits, ice, derelict ships, wreckage, and similar data. In the space over the land of the four continents there is also general information of exceptional interest to seafarers. Quite recently, the United States Hydrographic Office has commenced the issue of similar charts for the North Pacific and the Great Lakes. They bid fair to attain equal popularity.

Derelict ships (see *Chambers's Journal*, January 20, 1894) are a source of danger to passing vessels; and perhaps some of the missing steamers of late years have met their fate by collision with an abandoned ship. The United States Hydrographic Office has neither forgotten nor ignored this fact. Without undue prominence, tracks of drifting derelicts are graphically represented on the Pilot Chart for each month so long as these menaces to safe navigation cumber the surface of the ocean. Some of these derelicts have drifted right across the Atlantic Ocean; some have wandered aimlessly about in mid-Atlantic for many months, until wind and sea have riven the shattered hulls into their constituent parts. An American schooner, the *Fannie E. Wolston*, has probably the record drift in point of time. She was abandoned off the coast of Virginia in October 1891, moved eastward till the fortieth meridian was reached, remained almost stationary for several months, then drifted westward, got into the Gulf Stream again, and was last seen in October 1894 only about two hundred miles from the position where she had been left lonely just three years previously! Two American timber-laden schooners, the *Twenty-one Friends* and the *W. L. White*, drifted from America to Europe after abandonment. This class of vessels are frequently dangerously undermanned, cannot reduce sail sufficiently sharp in a sudden squall, become dismasted, and are left in a water-logged condition at the first favourable opportunity. A petition signed by about eleven hundred British shipmasters who had commanded vessels in the North Atlantic trade up to date, called for international co-operation in the destruction of derelict dangers. A joint Departmental Committee which sat to consider the matter has reported adversely on grounds which seamen cannot regard as serious, and in opposition to the recommendation of the International Marine Conference of 1888–89. Mr T. H. Ismay, managing owner of the far-famed White Star steamers, in the course of his valuable evidence before the Committee said that his commanders regarded derelict ships as dangerous; that his company has cabled from America any information of this nature reported subsequent to the issue of the latest Pilot Chart, which is regularly supplied to shipmasters by the United States Hydrographic Office; and that his company would willingly contribute towards any expense incurred by sending out war-ships in quest of derelicts. To Mr Ismay is due the first suggestion that steamships should keep along specified routes while crossing the North Atlantic which are used to-day, thanks to the advocacy of the Pilot Chart. The adoption of his propositions with respect to derelicts would probably still further enhance the safety of the travelling public and seafarers generally.

Icebergs and field-ice are more likely to be met with in the North Atlantic from February to August, although in some years straggling bergs are seen throughout the twelve months. The probable limits of this danger are carefully indicated on each month's Pilot Chart. Field-ice is formed on the sea-surface in winter; icebergs are detached pieces of Greenland glaciers drifted south by the Labrador current. It is supposed by some that the proximity of ice may readily be determined, even in foggy weather, by a fall in the sea-surface temperature. Nothing can be further from the truth. Many instances are on record of ships close to icebergs, in clear weather, finding the sea-temperature precisely the same as for many a league on each side thereof. Under similar atmospherical conditions a rapid fall of twenty degrees Fahrenheit in a few minutes has been experienced without an iceberg showing above the horizon. Captain S. T. S. Lecky, R.N.R., first brought this fact prominently before the nautical public in his practical work entitled *Wrinkles in Practical Navigation.*

The longest way round is often the shortest way to a vessel's destination. Sailing-ship routes on the Pilot Charts clearly show, for example, how unadvisable it would be for a navigator, bound to England from the equator, to make direct for his destined haven. In mid-Atlantic there is a region of high barometric pressure, around which the winds circulate in the same way as the hands of a watch. Hence, on the eastern side, where northerly winds prevail, the outward-bound sailing-ship has a fair wind. On the western side of the North Atlantic, however, where southerly winds are probable, the vessels bound to Europe are favourably situated. It is for this reason that the outward-bound vessels make a fairly direct track; while those homeward-bound are compelled to make a wide sweep to the westward out of the straight line. Again, old sailing-ships in ballast, bound to Canada for a cargo of timber, will actually sail right round this central Atlantic area of high barometric pressure, rather than contend against the persistent westerly winds of higher latitudes. Maury first drew attention to the desirability of adopting this longer route, in order to obtain a quicker passage. Ships of this description bound westward steer south-west from the English Channel, as though bound across the equator, until the twentieth parallel of north latitude is reached; then steer due west before the easterly winds of that region, gradually turn to the northward as the American coast is approached, and thus have a quicker and finer passage than would be possible along the fiftieth parallel.

A glance at the storm-tracks shown on the Pilot Charts affords every evidence that weather forecasters on this side of the North Atlantic are at a decided disadvantage should they rely solely upon the indications of their own barometers. As a general rule, to which there are most curious exceptions, cyclonic storms of that ocean which divides, yet unites, the continents of Europe and North America, either have their origin in the West Indies, proceed westward, then follow the trend of the coast to Newfoundland, and thence onward to the north of Scotland; or move seaward from America towards

Newfoundland, and thence travel eastward. Instances are not wanting of storms from the two sources coalescing near Newfoundland; and again single storms have split up into two or more during the passage across. Hence it is matter for congratulation that shipmasters remote from telegraphic communication so seldom suffer severely from mistakes in predictions. The thickness of the storm-tracks shown on the Pilot Chart varies directly as the intensity of the cyclones.

Fog is a serious source of anxiety to the masters of steamships along the much-frequented North Atlantic routes. Sleep is then a luxury to them, inasmuch as they are always well in evidence on the bridge until the fog has either cleared off or been left astern. And yet Captain Parsell, after the experience of half a century, agrees substantially with Mark Twain that life is safer on board a large liner than on shore! Occasionally, the continuous exposure in foggy weather proves too much for the anxious watchers on the bridge, and the master of the *America*, Captain Grace, after nobly fulfilling his duty in this way, crept below to die. Safety is all important, but passages must be made.

Ocean meteorology does not lend itself readily to exact mathematical treatment. The observations are scattered over large areas most irregularly, and not infrequently several years elapse between the passage of one ship and the next over the same geographical position. The proper appreciation of this fact has raised Maury to the highest pinnacle of fame, and rendered the United States Pilot Chart the best friend of navigators crossing the North Atlantic. Of all the nations, America is *facile princeps* in methods of keeping mariners promptly acquainted with every aid or difficulty along their routes in the North Atlantic or the North Pacific.

THE CAPTAIN MORATTI'S LAST AFFAIR.

CHAPTER II.—AT 'THE DEVIL ON TWO STICKS.'

It was mid-day, and the Captain Guido Moratti was at home in his lodging in 'The Devil on Two Sticks.' Not an attractive address; but then this particular hostel was not frequented by persons who were squeamish about names, or—any other thing. The house itself lay in the Santo Spirito ward of Florence, filling up the end of a *chiassolino* or blind alley in a back street behind the church of Santa Felicita, and was well known to all who had 'business' to transact. It had also drawn towards it the attention of the *Magnifici Signori*, and the long arm of the law would have reached it ere this but for the remark made by the Secretary Machiavelli, 'One does not purify a city by stopping the sewers,' he said; and added with a grim sarcasm, 'and any one of us might have an urgent affair to-morrow, and need an agent —let the devil rest on his two sticks.' And it was so.

Occasionally, the talons of Messer the Gonfaloniere would close on some unfortunate gentleman who had at the time no 'friends,' and then he was never seen again. But arrests were never made in the house, and it was consequently looked upon as a secure place by its customers. The room occupied by Moratti was on the second floor, and was lighted by a small window which faced a high dead wall, affording no view beyond that of the blackened stonework. The captain, being a single man, could afford to live at his ease, and though it was mid-day, and past the dinner hour, had only just risen, and was fortifying himself with a measure of Chianti. He was seated in a solid-looking chair, his goblet in his hand, and his long legs clothed in black and white trunks, the Siena colours, resting on the table. The upper part of his dress consisted of a closely fitting pied surcoat, of the same hues as his trunks; and round his waist he wore a webbed chain belt, to which was attached a plain but useful-looking poniard. The black hair on his head was allowed to grow long, and fell in natural curls to his broad shoulders. He had no beard; but under the severe arch of his nose was a pair of long dark moustaches that completely hid the mouth, and these he wore in a twist that almost reached his ears. On the table where his feet rested was his cap, from which a frayed feather stuck out stiffly; likewise his cloak, and a very long sword in a velvet and wood scabbard. The other articles on the table were a half-empty flask of wine, a few dice, a pack of cards, a mask, a wisp of lace, and a broken fan. The walls were bare of all ornament, except over the entrance door, whence a crucified Christ looked down in his agony over the musty room. A spare chair or two, a couple of valises and a saddle, together with a bed, hidden behind some old and shabby curtains, completed the furniture of the chamber; but such as it was, it was better accommodation than the captain had enjoyed for many a day. For be it known that 'The Devil on Two Sticks' was meant for the aristocrats of the 'profession.' The charges were accordingly high, and there was no credit allowed. No! No! The *padrone* knew better than to trust his longest-sworded clients for even so small a matter as a brown *paolo*. But at present Moratti was in funds, for thirty broad crowns in one's pocket, and a horse worth full thirty more, went a long way in those days, and besides, he had not a little luck at the cards last night. He thrust a sinewy hand into his pocket, and jingled the coins there with a comfortable sense of proprietorship, and for the moment his face was actually pleasant to look upon. The face was an eminently handsome one. It was difficult to conceive that those clear, bold features were those of a thief. They were rather those of a soldier, brave, resolute, and hasty perhaps, though hardened, and marked by success. There was that in them which seemed to mark a past very different from the present. And it had been so. But that story is a secret, and we must take the captain as we find him, nothing more or less than a bravo. Let it be remembered, however, that this hideous profession, although looked upon with fear by all, was not in those days deemed so dishonourable as to utterly cast a man out of the pale of his fellows. Triches, the bravo of Alexander VI., was very nearly made a cardinal; Don Michele, the strangler of Cesare Borgia, became commander-in-chief of the Florentine army, and had the honour of a conspiracy being formed against him—he was killed whilst leaving the house of Chaumont. Finally, there was that romantic scoundrel 'Il Medighino,' who advanced from valet to bravo, from bravo to be a pirate chief and the brother of a pontiff, ending his days as Marquis of Marignano and Viceroy of Bohemia. So that, roundly speaking, if the profession of the dagger did lead to the galleys or the scaffold, it as often led to wealth, and sometimes, as in the case of Giangiacomo Medici, to a coronet. Perhaps some such thoughts as these flitted in the captain's mind as he jingled his crowns and slowly sipped his wine. His fellow-men had made him a wolf, and wolf he was now to the end of his spurs, as pitiless to his victims as they had been to him. He was no longer young; but a man between two ages, with all the strength and vitality of youth and the experience of five-and-thirty, so that with a stroke of luck he might any day do what the son of Bernardino had done. He had failed in everything up to now, although he had had his chances. His long sword had helped to stir the times when the Duke of Bari upset all Italy, and the people used to sing—

> Cristo in cielo é il Moro in terra,
> Solo sa il fine di questa guerra.

He had fought at Fornovo and at Mertara; and in the breach at Santa Croce had even crossed swords with the Count di Savelli, the most redoubted knight, with the exception of Bayard, of the age. He had been run through the ribs for his temerity; but it was an honour he never forgot. Then other things had happened, and he had sunk, sunk to be what he was, as many a better man had done before him. A knock at the door disturbed his meditations. He set down his empty glass and called out, 'Enter!'

The door opened, and the Cavaliere Michele di Lippo entered the room. Moratti showed no surprise, although the visit was a little unexpected; but beyond pointing to a chair, gave Di Lippo no other greeting, saying simply: 'Take a seat, signore—and shut the door behind you. I did not expect you until to-morrow.'

'True, captain; but you see I was impatient. I got your letter yesterday, and the matter being pressing, came here at once.'

'Well—what is the business?'

The cavaliere's steel-gray eyes contracted like those of a cat when a sudden light is cast upon them, and he glanced cautiously around him. 'This place is safe—no eavesdroppers?' he asked.

'None,' answered Moratti; and slowly putting his feet down from the table, pushed the wine towards Di Lippo. 'Help yourself, signore.—No! Well, as you wish. And now, your business?'

There was a silence in the room, and each man watched the other narrowly. Moratti looked at the cavaliere's long hatchet face, at the cruel close-set eyes, at the thin red hair showing under his velvet cap, and at the straight set of the mouth, partly hidden by a moustache, and short-peaked beard of a slightly darker red than the hair on Di Lippo's head. Michele di Lippo, in his turn, keenly scanned the seamed and haughty features of the bravo, and each man recognised in the other the qualities he respected, if such a word may be used. At last the cavaliere spoke: 'As I mentioned, captain, my business is one of the highest importance, and'——

'You are prepared to pay in proportion—eh?' and Moratti twirled his moustache between his fingers.

'Exactly. I have made you my offer.'

'But have not told me what you want done.'

'I am coming to that. Permit me; I think I will change my mind;' and as Moratti nodded assent, Di Lippo poured himself out a glass of wine and drained it slowly. When he had done this, he set the glass down with extreme care, and continued: 'I am, as you are, captain, no longer a young man, and it is inconvenient to have to wait for an inheritance'—and he grinned horribly.

'I see, cavaliere—you want me to anticipate matters a little.—Well, I am willing to help you if I can.'

'It is a hundred crowns, captain, and the case lies thus. There is but one life between me and the County of Pieve in the Val di Magra, and you know how uncertain life is.'

He paused; but as Guido Moratti said nothing, continued with his even voice: 'Should the old Count of Pieve die—and he is on the edge of the grave—the estate will pass to his daughter. In the event of *her* death'——

'*Whew!*' Moratti emitted a low whistle, and sat bolt upright. 'So it is the lady,' he cried. 'That is not my line, cavaliere. It is more a matter of the poison-cup, and I don't deal in such things. Carry your offer elsewhere.'

'It will be a new experience, captain—and a hundred crowns.'

'Blood of a king, man! do you think I hesitate over a paltry hundred crowns? Had it been a man, it would have been different—but a woman! No! No! It is not my way;' and he rose and paced the room.

'Tush, man! It is but a touch of your dagger, and you have done much the same before.'

Moratti faced Di Lippo. 'As you say, I have executed commissions before, but never on a woman, and never on a man without giving him a chance.'

'You are too tender-hearted for your profession, captain. Have you never been wronged by a woman? They can be more pitiless than men, I assure you.'

The bronze on Moratti's cheek paled to ashes, and his face hardened with a sudden memory. He turned his back upon Di Lippo, and stared out of the window at the dead wall which was the only view. It was a chance shot, but it had told. The cavaliere rose slowly and flung a purse on the table. 'Better give him the whole at once,' he muttered. 'Come, captain,' he added, raising his voice. 'It will be over in a moment; and after all, neither you nor I will ever see heaven. We might as well burn for something; and if I mistake not, both you and I are like those Eastern tigers who once having tasted blood, must go on for ever—see!' and he laid his lean hand on the bravo's shoulder, 'why not revenge on the whole sex the wrong done you by one'——

The captain swung round suddenly and shook off Di Lippo's hand. 'Don't touch me,' he cried; 'at times like this I am dangerous. What demon put into your mouth the words you have just used? They have served your purpose—and she shall die. Count me out the money, the full hundred—and go.'

'It is there;' and Di Lippo pointed with his finger to the purse. 'You will find the tale complete—a hundred crowns—count them at your leisure. Addio! captain. I shall hear good news soon, I trust.' Rubbing the palms of his hands together, he stepped softly from the room.

Guido Moratti did not hear or answer him. His mind had gone back with a rush for ten years, when the work of a woman had made him sink lower than a beast. Such things happen to men sometimes. He had sunk like a stone thrown into a lake; he had been destroyed utterly, and it was sufficient to say that he lived now to prey on his fellow-creatures. But he had never thought of the revenge that Di Lippo had suggested. Now that he did think of it, he remembered a story told in the old days round the camp fires, when they were hanging on the rear of Charles's retreating army, just before he turned and rent the League at Fornovo. Rodrigo Gonzaga, the Spaniard, had told it of a countryman of his, a native of Toledo, who for a wrong done to him by a girl had devoted himself to the doing to death of women. It was horrible; and at the time he had refused to believe it. Now he was face to face with the same horror—nay, he had even embraced it. He had lost his soul; but the price of it was not yet paid in revenge or gold, and by heaven! he would have it. He laughed out as loudly and cheerfully as on that winter's night when he rode off through the snow; and laying hands on the purse, tore it open, and the contents rolled out upon the table. 'The price of my soul!' he sneered as he held up a handful of the coins and let them drop again with a clash on the heap on the table. 'It is more than Judas got for his—ha! ha!'

BANKING IN IRELAND.

REMINISCENCES OF AN IRISH BANK OFFICIAL.

Ireland has good reason to be proud of her banks, and their system of banking is perhaps as perfect as any that can be devised. The small local banks and private banking firms which are so numerous in England do not exist in the Emerald Isle, and their absence gives an air of stability to Irish banking which it might not otherwise possess. Instead, Ireland has nine great banks, and these have so spread a network of branches over the country, that every little town and village is provided with banking accommodation. That these banks do a lucrative business may be judged from the fact that, with one exception, they pay their shareholders dividends of from eight and a half to twenty per cent. Considering the very unfavourable conditions under which banking has of late years been carried on, results like these, it must be admitted, are very remarkable. Of course the rates charged are higher than in England, but then a large proportion of the business done in Ireland, especially in remote agricultural districts, is of a small and troublesome description, which most English banks would not accept. In the south and west, where farms are, generally speaking, very small, and the tenants consequently needy, the banks have to advance an immense amount of money in exceedingly small sums. These advances are made on bills signed by the borrower and some of his neighbours who go security for him, and the sums so lent range from five to ten pounds. I have frequently seen as many as seven and eight names on a bill of this kind, which fact speaks volumes for the financial position of the men accommodated. The banks accept payment by easy instalments; and he is considered a good man who can reduce his bill by ten shillings each quarter. In this way the bills are gradually reduced to very small sums—sometimes to one pound—before they are finally cleared off. Needless to say, Bank of England rates would not pay a bank for the time—to say nothing of the trouble—lost over business of this kind. Still the rate charged—about ten per cent.—is, all things considered, very moderate, and is cheerfully paid for the accommodation.

Then, again, current accounts are opened for small shopkeepers and tradesmen, the creditor balances of which never reach twenty pounds, or sometimes even ten pounds. In England, a bank would charge for keeping such accounts; but in Ireland we are too poor 'to ride the high-horse,' and have to be satisfied when these customers restrain a propensity to overdraw, which they invariably develop as soon as a cheque-book is placed in their hands.

I was once sent temporarily—about twenty years ago—to a small town near the south-west coast, and found that several persons who could neither read nor write had current accounts in the bank there. When these people wanted to remit money, they brought a blank cheque to the bank, which was filled up by one of the officials, and the illiterate drawer's mark duly witnessed. In one of these cases there was a considerable complication, for the illiterate proprietor of a cheque-book did not understand a word of English. Fortunately, the manager spoke a little Irish, and was generally able to understand him, though it sometimes happened that after half an hour had been lost in trying to learn the old countryman's wishes, he had to be marched off to fetch an interpreter. Most of the people there spoke Irish—though they understood English also—and bank officials often find a little knowledge of it extremely useful. A brother-cashier told me he once recovered five pounds by hearing a countryman to whom he had overpaid that amount stating so in Irish to a friend, the countryman never imagining the cashier was so accomplished a linguist.

Ancient coins and other souvenirs of the past are constantly finding their way into banks. I have seen a handful of gold pieces belonging to the fifteenth century which were dug out under the ruins of an old church. But the most curious thing I ever saw presented at a bank was handed to me about this time. One day, a beggar put something wrapped up in brown paper on the counter before me, and asked if it was worth anything. I opened the parcel, and found it contained a peculiarly shaped piece of old metal, terribly eaten away by rust. I asked the man where he found it, and what he meant by thinking it was of value, and he replied that he picked it up on the sea-shore. He proceeded to scrape off some of the rust, and pointed to a thin plate of gold beneath. I requested him to leave it with me for a few days; and that evening, with the aid of some acids, I cleaned it up so as to be able to perceive that it was a sword-hilt of apparently very ancient make. There was an inscription on the gold, but with the exception of the word 'Dios,' it was illegible. I sent the hilt to the Museum, and received a reply informing me that it was probably a relic of the Spanish Armada, which had at last been washed ashore after having been for centuries at the bottom of the sea. The authorities enclosed two pounds for the poor finder, who, needless to say, was delighted to receive them.

Tellers frequently receive back money which they had overpaid. Sometimes this is returned anonymously, and sometimes it is handed back by Catholic clergymen who learn about it in the confessional. Once, after I had been some years stationed in a large country town in the south, a letter was received at the bank one morning addressed as follows: 'To the man with the money in the —— Bank.' The manager thought that this was meant for me. Inside the envelope was a pound note, on the back of which was scrawled, 'Patricks Day three years.' This was intelligible enough. I turned up my 'Balance Book' of the 17th March three years before, and found that I had been short one pound on that day.

The Irish peasant is, as a rule, honest in his dealings with the bank. Of course he is no better than any one else in this respect: he will take all the money the bank is willing to lend him, without considering whether he is ever likely to be able to return it. Further, if hard pressed, he will resort to every means in his power to defeat the bank's process. But all this is, in his opinion, fair and above-board. He has also a disposition to keep anything he is overpaid, and to look on it as a sort of godsend, which it would be unlucky to return. With these exceptions, however, he is fairly straight; and during an experience of twenty-three years, I have met with but one case of downright roguery. This happened on a busy fair day, when I had a large crowd before me waiting to be paid. I was cashing a cheque for a respectable cattle-dealer, and while he was counting the money, I had turned to attend to somebody else, when I heard him say, 'I think this is a pound short, sir.' 'Perhaps so,' I said; 'let me see.' I took the notes, counted them, found it was as he had stated, and handed him another pound. Some fifteen minutes afterwards, a man to whom I had just given some five-pound notes, called out, 'This is five pounds short.' I knew this could not be, for the first mistake had made me particularly careful. I told the man to count his money again. He did, and then threw the notes back to me, saying he would like to see me make them more. I reckoned them: they were certainly five pounds short, yet I felt as positive as I had ever felt about anything that the money was correct when I gave it to him.

I deliberated for an instant what I should do. No use to tell him to come back in the evening after I had balanced my cash, for I suspected he had the money, and I knew that if he once left the office I would never see it again. I recollected now having seen him near the counter when I was paying the cattle-dealer the pound his money was short, and felt convinced that I had a rogue to deal with. Accordingly, I passed round to the public part of the office, and examined the floor under the counter; but the note was not there. There was a big crowd looking on, and the fellow pretended to be very indignant at being doubted. I asked him if he had any objection to turn his pockets inside out, and he immediately emptied their contents on the counter. He also opened his waistcoat, permitted me to examine his sleeves, and expressed his willingness to undress himself altogether if I wished. I was fairly puzzled, and was about to give it up, when it occurred to me to look under his boots. When I asked him to move his feet, however, he emphatically declined to do so, and I knew at once his reason for refusing. I half turned to request the manager to send for a policeman, and as I did so I saw the fellow give his leg a sudden kick back, which sent the note flying from under his boot across the floor. I should have liked to prosecute this man for attempted fraud, if only for the sake of example; but my superiors advised to let the matter drop. So he got off.

Of course forgeries and frauds of that description occasionally come under our notice in a bank; but the majority of these are but repetitions of what we every day read about in the records of the criminal courts, and are of little interest. Two cases of a peculiar nature, however, came under my observation. In one, a gentleman's coachman presented a cheque, which purported to be his master's, at the bank for payment. The cheque was made payable to the coachman; but the merest glance at it showed that it was neither filled up nor signed by the gentleman; in fact, no attempt was made to imitate his handwriting. On being questioned, the man coolly admitted that he had procured a blank cheque and had filled it up himself. Apparently, he was too stupid or too ignorant to know that his attempt would be detected by the difference in handwriting. The reason he gave for his action was that he was leaving his master's employment, and that there was a conflict of opinion between them as to the amount of wages which was due to him. Not being able to reconcile this difference, the man conceived the idea of drawing on his master's account for what he believed was owing to him. He was much frightened when he was informed that he had committed a penal offence; but under the circumstances, we let him off with a caution.

The other case was rather amusing. Mr X. was a very feeble but wealthy old merchant who kept a current account with us. He was a bachelor. His only relative was a nephew, a wild young scapegrace, with whom, on account of his conduct, he was not on speaking terms. His uncle was, however, a soft-hearted gentleman, and was in the habit of directing his clerk to give the nephew a pound or two occasionally. These payments the clerk always made by cheque, in order to have vouchers for them; and these cheques, like all others on the merchant's accounts, were filled up and signed by the clerk, his employer, owing to paralysis in the hands, being unable to write himself. The old merchant kept only one clerk, and his office was at the top of a rather high house. He came to us one day in a very troubled condition, stating that he had been going over the bank account for the past year with his clerk, and that he was amazed to find that his nephew had received at least three times as many cheques as he had authorised. His clerk, he said, had closely examined every one of the paid cheques—which all bore the nephew's endorsement—and admitted that they were all genuine. Further, his clerk was quite positive that he, Mr X., had duly authorised the issue of every one of them. At first sight, it looked like a case of collusion between the nephew and clerk; but this solution of the mystery the merchant would not hear of, vehemently declaring that he had perfect confidence in his clerk, and considered him above suspicion. On reflection, we, too, saw that he was right in this, for the clerk was well to do, and certainly unlikely to risk his situation for such a comparatively small sum. The only other conceivable explanation—that the merchant was making a mistake, and had forgotten having authorised some of the cheques—was ridiculed by that gentleman as absurd. The case was apparently one which would have taxed the genius of Mr Sherlock Holmes, and we were quite unable to assist our client in unravelling it.

The riddle was, however, solved shortly afterwards. The old gentleman used to leave his office every evening about an hour before his clerk. Being very absent-minded, he constantly forgot whatever instructions he had to give his subordinate until he had reached the bottom of the staircase and was about to step into the street. On these occasions, he would go back to the foot of the stairs and shout up his directions to the clerk, who was unable to see him on account of the staircase being a winding one. Apparently the nephew was acquainted with this habit of his uncle's, for it appeared he used to watch at the other side of the street until he saw him leave. He would then rush across, and being a capital mimic, would stand at the foot of the stairs and call out in his uncle's voice to the clerk above something like this: 'Mr Blank! are you there, Mr Blank?'

'Yes, sir,' would come from the top of the stairs.

'I forgot to say, Mr Blank, that you might give that scamp of a nephew of mine two pounds this evening.'

'All right, sir,' the clerk would respond; and in due course the nephew would receive his two pounds. It happened, however, that after his interview with us, Mr X. told his clerk he would give nothing more to his nephew for a very long time. The scapegrace, not knowing this, turned up at the foot of the staircase that evening; and the clerk was naturally astonished to hear the merchant again call out the usual two-pound credit for the nephew. His suspicions were aroused, and he ran down-stairs, just in time to see the enterprising youth vanishing out of the door. His uncle was exceedingly mad for a while; but I believe he was tickled by the humour of the trick, and I heard there was a reconciliation some time afterwards.

One cannot be a number of years in a bank without coming into contact with many peculiar characters; but the most eccentric individual I ever came across was pointed out to me shortly after I joined the service. A brother-official one day directed my attention to a respectable-looking farmer who had just entered the office. At first sight I saw nothing remarkable about the man; but I was presently amazed when I looked at his trousers. While one leg of the garment was made of an ordinary nice tweed, the other was composed of the coarsest corduroy, all worn and patched. The man transacted his business in a perfectly sensible manner, and after he had left the office, I heard his story. It appeared that he was a particularly devout, though somewhat extreme Catholic, and that his mind had become affected on religious matters. His hallucination took shape in the belief that one of his legs had turned Protestant. He was further persuaded that he was to be lost for all eternity if he did not succeed in converting it back to 'the true faith.' I believe he first tried some mild measures to bring the erring one again within the fold. The renegade leg, however, proving obstinate, he changed his tactics, and heaped every indignity upon it in an endeavour to effect by punishment what persuasion had failed to accomplish. Not only was the unhappy pervert cased in corduroy trousers, but he used to walk about his farm without putting shoe or stocking on that leg. People even went the length of saying that he set his dog at it, and used to leave it out of bed at night, while the faithful one was made comfortable. Probably much of this was exaggerated. I never heard the result of the treatment.

A 'run' on a bank is a time during which many strange incidents occur. I had such an experience—immediately after the failure of the Munster Bank in 1885. The run commenced with the Bank of Ireland, which, with its million of reserve and large proportion of immediately available asset to liability, is probably one of the soundest and wealthiest corporations of its kind in the universe. That in ordinary times the general public recognise this to be so, may be judged by the high price of its stock, which stands at about three hundred and forty pounds, or several points higher than that of the Bank of England itself.

The suspension of payment by the Munster

Bank of course caused a money panic in Ireland, and the action of the Bank of Ireland in letting it go down was severely criticised in the Nationalist press. This criticism, together with the ill-will of the shareholders and depositors of the suspended bank, quickly caused a run upon some of the country branches of the Bank of Ireland. The run from the beginning was fast and furious; and though the bank made every effort to restore confidence, even to parading a million of gold, which it got from the Bank of England, through the streets of Dublin, it was a considerable time before it was checked. Unfortunately, before things had quieted down, other banks were attacked, and in the town where I was then stationed—and where there was no branch of the Bank of Ireland—we had a very smart experience indeed. It was plain, however, from the commencement that the run was directed at the Bank of Ireland, rather than at us. The country people seemed to be even less anxious to draw their deposits than to get rid of whatever Bank of Ireland notes they possessed. In exchange for these they gladly accepted our notes, though, when requested, we gave gold, and found it good policy to do so, for it tended to restore confidence. Most of the depositors drew their money in gold; but some were quite satisfied to take our notes. Many did not seem to know that they were entitled to demand gold, and requested to be paid their money in the same form as they had lodged it. One old woman who made this demand was drawing a large sum which had been deposited for four or five years. Notwithstanding, she professed to be able to tell me the items of which her deposit was originally composed. So many sovereigns, she said, so many half-sovereigns, the rest in notes, 'but not a Bank of Ireland note in the whole of it.'

Occasionally a depositor when paid his money would, after counting it carefully over, hand it back to me again, apparently quite satisfied with this proof of our solvency. The crushing in front of the counter was often severe, and excitement would at such times run high, each man struggling with his neighbour to reach the cash office before the last sovereign was paid. I found it an excellent plan to spill a bag of a thousand sovereigns or so on the table immediately behind me, but in full view of the public. When the people saw we had plenty left, they calmed down, and came forward in their proper turns. The shopkeepers did us good service during these times, making it a point to hand in their lodgments in the presence of the excited depositors. Our supply of gold running short one evening, I was despatched for a large supply after bank hours to the nearest depôt, which was in a city a few hours away by rail. I was to return by the first train in the morning, so as to have my precious charge in the bank before the business of the day commenced. I turned up at the depôt in good time next morning, but, to my horror, owing to the early hour, not a car was to be seen on any of the stands. I ran wildly through several streets—no car anywhere. At last, when it was close on the train hour, I saw one standing before the house of a certain legal gentleman. When I reached it, the jarvey told me he had been engaged to bring the lawyer to the train. My case was desperate, and under the circumstances, I considered any action was fair; so I said to the man: 'Come with me, and I will give you five shillings.' 'Jump up, sir,' he replied; and we dashed off for the depôt just as the legal gentleman appeared on his steps and shook his umbrella at us. When, however, my driver saw the heavy iron box which two porters were bringing out of the bank to his car, he understood at once how necessary he was to me, and resolved to make the most of his opportunity. 'Beg pardon, sir,' he said; 'I never could have that heavy box at the train in time for five shillings.'

I saw I was at his mercy; so, not to waste time, replied: 'Have it in time and you will get ten.' He was satisfied; and we flew through the streets, reaching the station with just two minutes to spare.

It is extraordinary how very careless some poor people are of their money. I knew of a rate-collector who was in the habit of hiding his collection for several days at a time in the thatched roof of his house, in order to save himself ten minutes' walk to the bank. One night this roof took fire, and eighty pounds in notes were burned with it. Quite recently, a poor woman opened a little box before us in the bank and produced what appeared to be the burned remains of some pieces of paper. Closer inspection showed that these pieces of paper were the fragments of three Bank of England notes which had almost crumbled to dust from damp. She stated that they had been buried for two years, and 'that the water had got them.' With the greatest difficulty we managed to transfer the pieces to sheets of gum-paper, and though the numbers were either defective or missing altogether, the Bank of England paid the notes on getting an indemnity. Strange to say, a Provincial Bank of Ireland note which was in the box with the English ones escaped the consequences of the two years' burial, and was in so perfect a condition that the bank had no hesitation about paying it on presentation.

T. N. O'C.

ACONITE COLLECTORS ON THE SINGALILAS.

THE subject of my remarks is Aconite collected by Sirba Bhotiahs dwelling in the Darjiling district, and occasionally making a journey to their native country, Bhutan. Of the deadly nightshade tribe, the aconite is a plant which yields to none in the virulent poison of its roots. It is to be found growing at an elevation of ten thousand feet above the sea-level, and among other places on the Singalilas, a mountain range which is the watershed boundary between Nepal and British territory north-west of Darjiling. Here two classes of aconite, *Aconitum palmatum* and *Napellus* or *Nepalus*, grow freely.

Aconitum palmatum is collected in abundance at Tongloo, the southern termination of the Singalilas; but *Nepalus*, the more poisonous variety, requires a higher elevation in which to thrive. It takes kindly to the bleak rugged crags of Sundakphoo (12,929 feet), and is to be found under the rhododendron covers and cold shady watercourses. It seldom grows taller than three feet, a single stalk with blue flowers springing from each bulb or root. The natives, especially the hill-tribes, take aconite in its crude state as a remedy for various ailments, and every Bhotia has a few dried roots put away in some secure corner of his hut.

Early in October, when the aconite root has matured, one of the leading men of the village organises a party comprised of both sexes. He for the time being becomes their leader, settles all disputes and quarrels while out in camp, and while keeping an account of the general expenses, supplies to each the daily requirements in the way of food. His first step is to take out a 'permit' from the Forest Department, which costs fifteen rupees. (If the party is proceeding to the Nepal hills, no permit is required, but a toll is charged at each station on every load.) He wraps the pass up in a rag, and places it in his network bag of valuables, collects his band together, and sets out for the higher ranges. They travel as lightly as possible, each carrying a *thumsi*, or large bamboo basket, which contains a brass pot for cooking, a flat iron spoon to help out the rice, with a sufficient quantity of rice and vegetables to last five or six days. They also carry a thick Bhotiah blanket, with the indispensable *kukri*, or hatchet-knife, used also by the Goorkhas, fastened through the waistband. A strong sapling serves as a walking-stick and as a support for the basket, which is not unstrapped from the back until a halt is made. When tired, they relieve themselves by balancing their load on the stick.

The first stoppage in their march is generally made near a running stream, when they remove the burdens off their backs and light a fire or two of brushwood by the aid of flint and steel carried in the sheaths of their *kukris*. They do not drain the water off the rice, as is generally done, but eat it in a moist mass on big leaves fetched out of the jungle, with vegetables fried in oil, and an amazing number of hot chillies. One hour sees them through their meal and ready to continue the march again. When evening comes on, they make a second halt in some desirable place to spend the night, where they knock up temporary shelters made of bamboos, to keep off the night-dew, squat round the fires they have lighted, crack jokes, and relate adventures they have met with. The head-man, who is usually the centre of attraction, has a fund of stories at his command. Or if a lama—as is not unfrequently the case—is the leader of the party, he gives extracts out of their religious writings. It is an interesting sight to see him perched on a raised bit of ground, with his followers lying round him in all postures, gazing with rapt attention while he gives episodes out of their sacred books. The Bhotiahs are of the Buddhist religion, and own as their spiritual head the Great Lama of Tibet; but the Buddhism to which they adhere is much interwoven with demon-worship.

As night advances, and the party think it is time to retire, they disappear within their bamboo shelters, taking the precaution to put their *kukris* under their heads, in case of a night attack from the robber tribes who hover about the frontier. Some of the hardier of the Sirbas sleep in the open air, with a blanket about them, heedless of the cutting wind and thermometer at zero. They are generally followed by a big woolly Tibetan dog, a fierce-looking animal resembling a bear, with large blue eyes. It sleeps during the day, and keeps watch at night, giving low growls every now and again.

As soon as the party has arrived at the slopes where aconite is plentiful, they build bamboo huts about five feet high, with leaves for the roofs, and make the place generally habitable. After their morning meal, each shoulders his basket, and takes a spade, for which a handle has been made from a jungle sapling. They start for the slopes lower down, leaving the dog and one of the company behind in charge of the camp. Before beginning operations, a ceremony has to be performed.

The Nepalese seldom take up the trade of aconite collecting, as they have a superstition that the presiding demon of the hills imprisons evil spirits in this plant, which fly out as soon as it is dug up, and inflict dire calamity on the digger. Bhotiahs have this superstition also, with a remedy. They always have in their party a destroyer of these spirits; and every morning before digging, the lama, standing on a convenient hill with his crowd round him, makes a fire and burns some *dhuna*, a sort of resin, then putting two fingers in his mouth, he gives several shrill whistles. All wait in breathless silence till an answering whistle is heard, an echo, the cry of a bird—pheasant as a rule—from the gorge below, or the soughing of the wind among the pines, which they take as the dying dirge of the spirits.

Thus satisfied, they commence the digging, shake out the mud, and throw the roots into the basket. By evening you can see them climbing up the hillsides from various directions, making for the encampment, where they empty out the contents of their baskets in heaps, and cover them with bamboo leaves, to keep out the heavy frost of the night. The collectors work in couples, and during the day the roots are spread out to dry in the sun. When a sufficient quantity is collected and dried, bamboo frames are made, with a fire below, on which the aconite is placed when the flame has died out. Three to four days over this artificial heat dries up the root. While the firing process is going on, the man attending to it has a cloth tied round his head, covering his nose, as it is injurious to inhale the fumes. It causes a feeling of heaviness, followed by symptoms not unlike intoxication.

While the aconite is drying, the collectors fill in their time snaring pheasants, which come to the open country to feed, trapping musk-deer, which are plentiful on the Singalilas, and shooting various other kinds of game to supply their immediate wants. The live pheasants and deer they put into bamboo baskets, and bring in to the stations for sale.

The whole trip generally lasts a month; and when sufficient aconite has been collected and dried, the roots are packed in baskets, with other goods and chattels on the top, which make a very decent load, varying from one hundred and twenty to two hundred pounds. Sirba women are as sturdy as the men, and it not unfrequently happens that their loads are heavier than those of the so-called stronger sex. When all are ready, they shoulder their baskets and start off at a brisk pace, walking one behind the other, from a distance looking not unlike a huge serpent winding along the hill-path. Keeping step, they move so rapidly that it is difficult for others unaccustomed to hill-climbing to keep up with these hardy mountaineers. To one who understands their language, it is by no means dull work walking with them, as they are a jolly crowd, laughing, chatting, and relating stories in their graphic Oriental manner—the sum and substance first, then the narrative *in extenso*, not leaving out the most minute detail.

Arriving at the commercial centre at the termination of their march, the goods are soon disposed of, and each man receives his share of the profits according to the amount of aconite he has collected. They then make their purchases for the winter, besides vegetable and other seeds for the coming season, and once more settle down to their quiet village life, to attend to the cultivation of potatoes, Indian corn, bringaels (or brinjalls, the fruit of the egg-plant), and cardamom.

JEWELS FIVE WORDS LONG.

In this country we are not good at inventing names. The Chinese, the Japanese, and even the Red Indians, can all give us points and beat us in that apparently simple art. We fancy in Europe that we have done very well if we can think of an appropriate simple name, such as George, Henry, or John Thomas. But more primitive nations love a good long descriptive name, which tells you something about a man's character. Thus, in 1890, when the Red Indians were on the war-path, the newspapers were full of accounts of braves bearing the most picturesque and charming names. Among them were Sitting Bull, Shaved Head, Young-man-afraid-of-Horses, Broken Arm, Big Foot, Yellow Hair, Red Thunder, Crazy Horses, Little Wound, Kicking Bear, and Red Cloud. Longfellow has written poetry about Driving Cloud, 'the chief of the mighty Omahas,' and has acquainted us with Rain-in-the-Face, Great Pearl Feather, Big Sea Water, Face-in-a-Mist, Storm Fool, and Son of the Evening Star. Even the elder Disraeli waxes enthusiastic over these Red Indian names, and mentions with admiration the examples of Great Swift Arrow, Dawn of the Day, Sun-bright, Path Opener, and Great Eagle.

But the Red Indian must hide his diminished head when he comes into competition with the Heathen Chinee. The daughter of one of the Chinese ambassadors accredited to London rejoiced in the romantic and expressive appellation of The Tottering Lily of Fascination. There is a Chinese disease-god known as Mr Muscle-and-Bone Pain; and another with the still longer name of Mr Imperfect-in-every-part-of-his-Body. This latter god is apparently a kind of residuary legatee of all the diseases not especially appropriated to other deities.

But wonderful as these Chinese names are, perhaps the Japanese names of deities are still more marvellous. Mr B. H. Chamberlain, in his translation of the *Kojiki*, or 'Records of Ancient Matters,' has familiarised Englishmen with a few of them; and we are glad to see that Mr Murray, in his recent book on Japan, has reproduced them at full length, evidently not without a certain sense of satisfaction to his own sense of the humorous. Thus, the three primitive Japanese deities were named, it seems, Master-of-the-August-Centre-of-Heaven, High-August-Producing-Wondrous-Deity, and Divine-Producing-Wondrous-Deity. These august and wondrous deities were uncreated, but not immortal. Overpowered, presumably, by the weight of their own names, they pined away and died. Thereupon, two other gods were born from a sprout like a reed-shoot. Their names were Pleasant-Reed-Shoot-Prince-Elder-Deity, and Heavenly-Externally-Standing-Deity. These also died; and to them succeeded Earthly-Externally-Standing-Deity, and Luxuriant-Integrating-Master-Deity. Then they were internally disintegrated and died too. Next were born five pairs, and their illustrious names were these: Mud-Earth-Lord and Mud-Earth-Lady; Germ-Integrating-Deity and Life-Integrating-Deity; Elder-of-the-Great-Place and Elder-Lady-of-the-Great-Place; Perfect-Exterior and O-Awful-Lady; and lastly, The-Male-who-invites and The-Female-who-invites. We think we have met the Mud-Earth-Lord and the O-Awful-Lady in London sometimes.

But though these were among the earliest of Japanese gods, it must not be supposed that later divinities were content with less expressive titles. On the contrary, we find them maintaining the traditions of their predecessors with the utmost spirit. Thus, there are the Crying-Weeping-Female-Deity, the Heaven-Shining-Great-August-Deity, His-Augustness-Moon-Night-Possessor, and His-Brave-Swift-Impetuous-Male-Augustness. Nor must we omit that important god, Thought-Includer; nor the gentleman bearing the name of His-Augustness-Heaven-Plenty-Earth-Plenty-Heaven's-Sun-Height-Prince-Rice-Ear-Ruddy-Plenty. Imagine what a nice name this would be to call out rapidly! Conceive the dismay of a linkman or policeman, after a party, having to call out for His-Augustness-Heaven-Plenty-Earth-Plenty-Heaven's-Sun-Height-Prince-Rice-Ear-Ruddy-Plenty's carriage! How did His-Augustness, &c. manage to get it all on his visiting-card? Apparently, he failed utterly in the vain attempt, for we learn that the name was usually shortened to Ninigi-no-Mikoto, which itself is quite long enough for any ordinary pagan.

After His-Augustness, there is a certain tameness about such names as Prince Fire-Shine, Prince Fire-Subside, Prince Fire-Climax, Deity-Salt-Possessor, Ocean-Possessor, and even His-Augustness-Divine-Yamato-Iware-Prince, whatever that high-sounding title may imply. But our hopes revive again when we find a region called the Central-Land-of-Reed-Plains; one of the Japanese islands called the Great-Yamato-the-Luxuriant-Island-of-the-Dragon-Fly; and another small island called Onogoro, or Self-coagulated. There seem, too, to be infinite possibilities about such names as Okusaka-no-Oji and Prince Kinashi-no-Karu. They are sure to signify something at once august and wondrous and shining and plentiful, with possibly just a touch of ruddiness and a flavour of rice to add a zest to their other sublime qualities.

While, however, we may feel inclined to smile at these long-winded Japanese names, we must not forget that even Europeans occasionally allow what may be termed the christening impulse to run away with them. Thus, in June 1887, Count André Zamoyski christened his baby daughter, Marie-Josèphe-Sophie-Isabelle-Rose-Françoise-Stanislase-Antoinette-Thérèsa-Louise-Etiennette-Christine-Caroline-Griseldis-Michelle-Janvière-Désirée-Marguerite. This ought to put the early Japanese gods and His Augustness on their mettle.

But we can produce a still better set of names. In October 1886, a religiously-minded Buckinghamshire farmer named Jenkins brought his first-born to the parish church to be christened, and this was to be the name: Abel-Benjamin-Caleb-Daniel-Ezra-Felix-Gabriel-Haggai-Isaac-Jacob-Kish-Levi-Manoah-Nehemiah-Obadiah-Peter-Quartus-Rechab-Samuel-Tobiah-Uzziel-Vaniah-Word-Xystus-Yariah-Zechariah. It will be observed that the names are all arranged in alphabetical order, and are as far as possible selected from Scripture. It was only with the very greatest difficulty that the clergyman dissuaded Mr Jenkins from doing the lasting wrong to his child that he had unwittingly devised; but eventually it was decided to christen the boy simply Abel. Abel seemed reasonable enough, and there is nothing to be said against Benjamin; but when it came to Caleb, doubtless the worthy parson thought of the sad case of the little American baby who, overhearing his parents' decision to give him that uninteresting name, got out of his cradle that same night and ran away. He has never been heard of since. Certainly, Caleb, Kish, and Yariah are too awful; though many a worthy man has borne the first of the three names with credit to himself and his country.

Mr Jenkins was evidently born after his time. Had he lived in the days of the Puritans, the 'linkéd sweetness long drawn out' of his Biblical name would have been very much appreciated. Those were the times when the Roundheads were proud of such names as Hew-their-bones-asunder-Smith, Bind-their-kings-in-chains-and-their-nobles-with-links-of-iron-Jackson, and If-Jesus-Christ-had-not-died-for-thee-thou-hadst-been-damned Barebones—the latter gentleman being usually known as Damned Dr Barebones, for shortness. One poor fellow was actually christened—and doubtless in all reverence—Blastus Godly. We must confess we are glad the days of Puritanism are ended. We prefer names like Dick, Tom, and Harry. The Red Indian titles, such as Sitting Bull, Rain-in-the-Face, and Red Thunder, are not bad; but may we and our children and our children's children be preserved from such names as Pleasant-Reed-Shoot-Prince-Elder-Deity, and His-Augustness-Heaven-Plenty-Earth-Plenty-Heaven's-Sun-Height. No room for the rest.

AT AFTERNOON TEA.

At afternoon tea, and alone for a wonder!
The quaint little table invitingly drawn
Where the shadows lay cool, and sunlight crept under
The low-growing beeches that sheltered the lawn:
In a dainty white gown, and hat large and shady,
Half-hiding the face I was wishful to see;
More radiant than Summer she sat—my fair lady—
At afternoon tea.

Far off in the pleasance a fountain was singing,
And tossing its silver high over the trees;
The wood-birds were glad, and the jasmine was flinging,
With prodigal haste, its white stars to the breeze;
While above the blue china we bent, and grew merry
O'er topics on which two can always agree,
Mere gossip, of course, but enjoyable—*very*,
At afternoon tea.

Then the cream was poured in, and the sugar was stirred;
'Was the fragrant infusion too strong or too weak?'
She asked; and in answer I whispered a word
Which brought the swift rose to her delicate cheek;
Her eyes found a refuge beneath their long fringes,
But she did not say nay to my passionate plea:
Oh, the gate of Love's Eden swung back on gold hinges
At afternoon tea!

And we had such sweet secrets to tell to each other
That it might have been sunset, or moonrise, or dawn,
Till we chanced to look up and encountered her mother,
Come softly upon us across the soft lawn—
Come softly upon us, unruffled and stately,
With a questioning glance at her daughter and me,
Which changed to a smile as I handed sedately
Her afternoon tea.

Ah, love! it is years since we lingered together
Below the green boughs in the glory of June,
With hopes that were bright as the sunshiny weather,
And hearts beating time to one old-fashioned tune;
But I know our joint lives are with happiness laden,
As I tell the small fairy enthroned on my knee
How 'Mother' was won, when a beautiful maiden,
At afternoon tea.

E. Matheson.

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THE GENTLE ART OF BOOKBINDING.

By Violet Chambers Tweedale.

In tracing the history of this beautiful and artistic craft, the inquirer finds himself on the distant shores of that far-back time when books were first made. From the birth of literature, he must follow his subject through the various stages of progress leading to that great triumph of human intelligence, a noble book nobly bound—from first beginnings, when the savage loosely wrapped up his picture writings in leaves or skins, to the glorious workmanship of the sixteenth century, and onward still to the mechanically perfect execution of the present day.

Before the invention of printing, the work of binding books was mostly confined to the goldsmith and those monkish bibliophiles who, having laboriously written and carefully illuminated a manuscript, sought to prepare a worthy cover in which to preserve their treasure. Many of the works prior to the fifteenth century which have been handed down to us are of a devotional character, gorgeous in velvet, studded with jewels, with bosses of gold and silver, and rich in ornamentation of every kind. But bookbinding as we know it may be said to have come into vogue with the Mainz Bibles and the Aldine editions of the classics. Without doubt Italy of the sixteenth century was the home and headquarters of artistic bookbinding. On the borders of the Adriatic, Aldo Manuzio first set up his press, and seeking to make the binding rival the beauty of the type, brought the science of boarding as near perfection as it is possible to attain. Even to-day, what a thrill goes through the book-lover as he fingers some Aldine edition, with its beautiful Greek or Roman type, and the sign of the well-known anchor and dolphin!

Those early pioneers had the advantage of being assisted by artists of no mean merit, who did not scorn to use their decorative faculty in the outward adornment of works not always worthy of their coverings. Many noble patrons arose in support of this illustrious house. Isabella d'Este, Marchioness of Mantua, patronised largely Manuzio's establishment; and the old Aldo is said to have printed her books on vellum, and decorated the boards in the most sumptuous manner. This celebrated house flourished for about a hundred years, son succeeding father; and during that period nine hundred and eight different works were given to the world by their presses.

The old stamped blind-work—impressed marking on the boards without gilding or colour—which characterised the earlier period now gave place to decoration by means of tooled markings in fret. The designs were often purely Oriental. No doubt Aldo employed Greek and Oriental workers, who brought with them their art traditions, and probably much of his work was copied from Eastern manuscripts. One folio in the British Museum is bound in brown calf, bearing a circular ornament in the centre panel, and the text, 'The kingdom is God's,' set forth in Arabic characters. The design, which is outlined in gold, is produced by a matting of gold with a small point. Broad lines encircle the panel, and an interlaced cable pattern, partly in gold, partly in blind-work, completes the decoration. The leather commonly used in the Aldine workshop was a smooth olive-coloured skin. Aldo was the first to discard wooden boards.

Italy did not maintain her supremacy in binding, and the art there seems to have decayed rapidly towards the close of the sixteenth century. Perhaps the skill of Italian binders is nowhere better exemplified than in the works handed down from Tommaso Maioli's library. All his books were the perfection of binding, and had on the outside the inscription, 'Tho. Maioli et Amicorum,' usually placed upon a scroll below the shield which bore the title of the book. There are several specimens of Maioli's work in the British Museum, one of which is bound in rich yellow morocco. The delicate gold tooling round the border is composed of butterflies, daisies, and myrtle twigs. Some of his bindings were in black morocco, decorated with gold scroll-work, and with a mosaic of red and white leather. Many of Maioli's books passed eventually to Paris. The perfection of the scroll-work, the graceful curves, the moresque ornaments, are characteristic of the library of this famous collector. One beautiful effect in some of them was arrived at by rubbing gold-leaf into the leather, thereby imparting a peculiar and rich bloom to the boards.

France began to produce beautiful bindings under the directorship of Jean Grolier de Servin, a courtier and diplomat, born in 1479, who lived long in Italy, and had his bindings largely done by Italian workmen. No literary treasure beloved of the bibliophile is more highly prized than an example of Grolier's library. He possessed about three thousand books, many of which were magnificently bound in brown calf, highly ornamented with floral arabesques, and the geometrical patterns with which his name is associated. There must have existed some close intimacy betwixt Aldo and Grolier. Many books issued from the Aldine press were dedicated to Grolier, and *éditions de luxe* were presented to his library. Grolier was the first to use morocco dressed as now, getting his supplies direct from the Levant; and he was amongst the first to use lettering pieces for the backs of his books.

During the whole of the sixteenth century the printer or publisher was the binder, and only in the seventeenth century do we find the work of binding done outside by master-binders. Grolier searched Italy for skilled workmen, both printers and binders, though he probably prepared many of the designs. The mottoes stamped on his books varied at different periods of his life. But the one which seems to have been most frequently used was 'Io. Grolierii et Amicorum;' proving that, like Maioli, the fastidious Grolier was also desirous of sharing his treasures with those worthy the name of friend.

In England, as early as the twelfth century, Durham, London, and Winchester, with several celebrated monasteries, had each its school of binding. Durham still possesses a series of books, bound towards the close of the twelfth century, that are well worthy to compete in excellence and beauty with the work of foreign nations. Oxford and Cambridge both produced an interesting series of bindings, prized by connoisseurs. Lady Fitzhugh, bequeathing her books to her family, wrote thus in her will in 1427: 'I wyl that my son Rob't have a Sautre covered with rede velvet; and my doghter Marion a Primer cou'ed in rede; and my doghter Darcy a Sauter cou'ed in blew; and my doghter Mal-de-Eure a Prim cou'ed in blew.'

The introduction of printing into England, when Caxton set up his press in Westminster, changed the character of the bindings, owing, no doubt, to the influx of foreign workmen. Caxton's bindings were as a rule very simple, always of leather, with stamps of flowers and curious animals. Several bindings produced by John Reynes, now in the possession of the British Museum, show to what excellence the art had attained during the reign of Henry VIII. Grolier's patterns were introduced into England during the reign of Edward VI. It was then that gold tooling became usual in England, the majority of Henry VIII.'s books being blind-tooled. The books belonging to Edward VI. which are treasured in the British Museum are well worthy of notice. Perhaps the finest is *Petri Bembi Cardinalis Historia Veneta, Venetiis*, 1551. Each cover is adorned with the king's arms and crowned initials. Above the arms stands the royal motto, 'Dieu et mon Droyt.' The interlaced pattern is in black. Another book has the motto 'Omnis Potestas a Deo' on the sides. The royal arms are on the edges of the leaves, and painted in colours, with gold initials.

The bindings done for Queen Elizabeth were exceptionally fine; the embroidered covers, decorated with silver, precious stones, and enamel, testify to her sumptuous tastes. On her visit to Cambridge in 1578, she was presented with a Greek Testament, 'bound in redd velvett, and lyned with gold, the armes of England sett upon eche side of the booke, vearey faire.'

Mary, Queen of Scots, also showed considerable interest in the adornment of her library, which changed its character according to her eventful life, the works bound for her towards the close of her reign being in funereal black, suggestive of the fate that hung over her head. In the British Museum there is an old Testament, once the property of the unhappy Queen, which is bound in truly regal style. The thick boards are covered with crimson velvet, richly embroidered with gold twist and coloured flowers. Brass bosses and clasps, engraven with the arms of England, go to make up a truly royal volume.

The introduction of the style known as *fanfare* became general at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries. It was first introduced by Nicolas and Clovis Eve, a family of binders who worked for Henri III. In 1579 Nicolas bound forty-two copies of the *Livre des Statuts de l'Ordre du Saint Esprit* for the king; and Clovis bound for Henri IV. and Louis XIII. The Eves produced three distinct styles of work. In one, the *azured* toolings of Lyons were used with rich interlacings and spirals. In the last, the spirals have become smaller, palms and oak branches mingling in the decorations. In their earlier work the compartments are not filled in. Toolings seem to have attained to the height of delicacy about 1625, when Le Gaston improved on the *fanfare* of the Eves. His designs of minute arabesque, on scarlet morocco, are notedly beautiful. His habit of forming a pattern of innumerable gold dots caused his style to be known as *pointillé*.

Some very fine binding was executed for King James I., who during his entire life was an enthusiastic patron of letters and art. In some of his books the thistle is introduced with heavy corner-pieces, and the arms in the centre. One fine piece of work, now in the British Museum, is in bright brown calf powdered with *fleurs de lys*. Another folio in crimson velvet has the arms of England embroidered on both sides, with gold thread on a groundwork of yellow silk. The king's initials are worked above. The lettering is in leather, and the boards are tied together by red ribbon, constituting a regal book in every particular. John Gibson in Scotland, and the Barkers in England, were appointed to be the king's binders; but there is little trace of their work now extant.

The beginning of the eighteenth century seems to have marked the gradual dying out of royal interest in bookbinding. The buying of books extended enormously, but the binding was executed for the people, not the king. Suddenly, out of that dark dawn began a new and brilliant era, when English binders made efforts that soon gave them a foremost place. Trade revived, and early bindings lying *perdu* in the charter rooms of old houses were eagerly sought out and reproduced. Book-collecting became the hobby of many noble Houses, and the demand was productive of the most satisfactory results. About 1720 the firm of Eliot and Chapman produced the *Harleian* style in their work for the library of the first Earl of Oxford (Robert Harley). Those books are all solidly bound, their decoration consisting of centre panels, combining the pine-apple with a broad tooled border. The leather used was red, and the centre ornament usually diamond in form.

Russia leather came into use for book covers about the year 1730; and the middle of the eighteenth century witnessed the introduction of the *sawn back*, the bands with which the book was sewn being concealed behind the sheets, no projection appearing. Russia leather was largely used by Roger Payne, who seems to have been the first binder who attempted to attune the outside adornment to the internal contents of his books. He performed every part of the work with his own hands. His designs are very graceful, and consist of stars, crescents, trellis-work of vines, &c. The colour he mostly affected was what he termed *Venetian*, namely, olive green. His great taste in ornamentation brought him many patrons amongst the rich and noble. Bindings by Payne are easily recognised by their marked characteristics, one of which is a peculiar method of arranging bands. There is no doubt that the entire race of English binders owe much to Payne's workmanship, both on account of its purity of design and high finish.

The nineteenth century thus saw the revival of all that was elegant and good in ancient boarding. John Whittaker was the first to introduce a style called the *Etruscan*, in which the designs are carried out in their own colours in place of gilt. The British Museum possesses the Prayer-book of Queen Charlotte, elaborately bound by one Edwards of Halifax, in Yorkshire. This binder successfully pursued the Etruscan style, and took out a patent in 1785 for his own peculiar method of ornamentation, the chief feature of which was painting on vellum. The royal Prayer-book, a beautiful example of his work, is elaborately coloured and gilded.

Case-binding, or 'cloth-work,' was first introduced into England by Pickering the publisher and his bookbinder Leighton in 1825. It took the place of the paper formerly in vogue, and the first cloth covers had printed labels in place of lettering. The first book issued in stamped cloth covers was an edition of the *Penny Cyclopædia* which came from the workshop of Archibald Leighton.

To what higher realms of fancy and art the gentle craft of bookbinding may yet attain, it would be hazardous to guess. Elaborately decorated children's books are one of the features of the age. The outward attractiveness of the gift makes the book of tenfold interest in the youthful recipient's eyes, and may often induce the love of collecting in early years, thus helping to lay the foundations for a happy old age, for no life can be said to be lived to the full without the eloquent silence of well-filled book-shelves. It is matter of regret to the lover of beautiful bindings that originality of design seems for the time being to have fallen into abeyance. Though the bindings of old are well worthy of imitation, yet the lovers of the bibliopegistic art long for a new stimulus to be given to their favourite hobby. The hydraulic press, the rolling-machine, the embossing and arming press, have done much for the art of boarding. At no time has our present style of finish, solidity, and elasticity been surpassed. The newest methods may doubtless be said to have grown out of the old ones, as

> Out of old fieldes
> Cometh all new corne fro yere to yere,
> And out of old bookes, in good faithe,
> Cometh al this new science that men lere.

Let us hope the modern sons of this ancient craft, who have so skilfully adapted the old to the new, will not rest content till they are not a hair's-breadth behind their predecessors in technical skill or grace of design; future effort and artistic aspiration will doubtless lead the craft to new triumphs.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.[*]

CHAPTER XII.—TOO LATE! TOO LATE!

'Mr Dalton back?' said Wynyan in surprise.

'Yes, sir,' replied old Hamber, shaking his head; 'and I'm afraid he had better have stopped away. Mr Brant has just left him, and they have been having words.'

'Quarrelling?'

'Yes, sir; you could just hear something through the baize door. It's very, very sad.'

'Yes, sad indeed. How long has he been here?'

'Best part of half an hour, sir. He came in a cab, and said he had not long been up from Brighton. Looked a deal better, sir—more like he used, sir; but I'm afraid he won't be so well now.'

Wynyan went to the baize door, opened it, and passed through; then tapped at the inner door, but there was no reply. He waited a minute, and tapped again. Still no answer; and after hesitating a few moments, he knocked sharply, turned the handle, and entered.

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'Nobody here,' he muttered; and he was in the act of crossing to the farther room, when he caught sight of Dalton lying with outstretched arms, face downward, upon the thick Turkey carpet beyond the table.

At the first glance, Wynyan saw that the old man was clutching a familiar packet in his left hand; and catching it from him, he thrust it into his pocket, feeling that it was a duty to preserve that from falling into other hands. The next moment, he had turned the sick man over, and saw that his eyes were wide open and seemed to question him.

'The paper, the plans?' said Wynyan hastily. 'Yes, sir: here: safe.'

He half drew them from his breast-pocket, and thrust them back to grasp the old man, as Dalton slowly closed his eyes.

Wynyan's next act was to open the table drawer where the drops were always kept; but the bottle had not been there for days; and grasping the imminence of the danger, he rushed out.

'Mr Hamber, here! Mr Dalton has fainted. Quick, one of you, a cab. Fetch Doctor Kilpatrick.'

One of the clerks rushed off as Hamber and Wynyan hurried back into the room, where everything possible was done.

'Do you think we had better get him back home, sir?' said Hamber nervously. 'He doesn't seem to come-to a bit!'

'I dare not risk it,' replied Wynyan. 'We must wait until the doctor comes.—Keep on fanning him while I bathe his temples.'

But the minutes went by till half an hour had glided away, and still there was no change.

'Mr Brant Dalton ought to be here,' said Wynyan sternly. 'Do you know where he has gone?'

'No, sir,' said the old man piteously. 'He went out as you came in.'

'Send some one in a cab to his chambers to tell him of his uncle's seizure. He may be there.'

The old man went out; and Wynyan knelt down by the insensible man again, a cold, chilly feeling of despair creeping over him, and sending his thoughts away to the pleasant home where there was one in profound ignorance of her father's state. And now the thought came, ought he to rush off and tell her, bringing her back?

No: his place was by the old man's side, and it would be a cruelty to perhaps give the poor girl unnecessary alarm. For, though this fit was strangely prolonged, it might be similar in nature to others from which Dalton had suffered.

Then Hamber came back.

'I have sent some one, sir,' he said.

'Do you think we ought to send a messenger to South Audley Street?' whispered Wynyan.

'For Heaven's sake, no, sir! It would frighten the poor dear young lady terribly. I hope he will come-to soon; and he would not, I am sure, like for us to have sent.'

'No,' said Wynyan thoughtfully. 'But I am getting terribly alarmed.'

'Shall I send for the nearest doctor, sir?'

'I would have said so before; but a stranger would not grasp the peculiarities of his constitution, and we could not readily explain matters. Better wait a little longer.'

They waited for another quarter of an hour, when, alarmed more and more by the terrible pallor, Wynyan rose from where he had knelt bathing the wrinkled forehead, and hurried through to the office, where all the clerks were now collected.

'Two of you,' he said, 'fetch the nearest doctor. Go different ways.'

At that moment a carriage stopped at the door, and Wynyan ran out on to the landing to find Dr Kilpatrick coming up the stairs, followed by the clerk who had been for him.

'How is he?' was the stern question. 'I thought he was at Brighton.'

The next minute he was upon his knees by his old patient, and for the next hour applied remedy after remedy without effect, while Wynyan and Hamber stood watching and attending upon the skilful physician as he kept on making demands.

At about that time the door was opened behind them. 'Go away!' said the doctor sharply. 'Don't interrupt.'

'But my uncle—how is he?' said a familiar voice; and Wynyan looked round to see that Brant was coming forward, looking ghastly. 'Baines came to fetch me.'

'Oh, it's you,' said the doctor quietly. 'There; I can do no more. My carriage is waiting; we must get him home at once.—Mr Wynyan, will you come with me? No; stop; it ought to be your duty, Brant. Will you two young men carry him down in a chair, or will you have help?'

'We can do it,' said Wynyan, Brant remaining speechless.

'Quick, then.—Take that light cane-seat chair; I'll follow behind and hold him back.'

The limp figure was lifted into the chair, and Dalton's head hung over upon his left shoulder. Hamber hurried on first to descend and warn the coachman; and then a few minutes sufficed to place the head of the great firm reclining back in one corner of the brougham, the doctor going before, to hold him in his place.

'But ought not a messenger to be sent on first, sir?' whispered Wynyan, leaning in.

'No: there is not time. He must be got home at once.'

Brant entered next, to sit down opposite to his uncle, and the doctor leaned forward.

'Tell him where to go, Wynyan, and to drive slowly.'

Wynyan looked him full in the eyes—a meaning, questioning look, and the doctor shook his head in reply.

Wynyan's thoughts flashed immediately to South Audley Street, seeing as if he were there the driving up of the doctor's brougham, and the horror and agony of one whom he would have died for to spare a pang. Then he was suddenly brought to himself.

'Let me take the chair, Mr Wynyan,' said a low-toned broken voice, and looking round, it was to see the old clerk, with the tears streaming down his wrinkled cleanly-shaved face.

'My poor dear old master and friend!' he kept on saying as they entered the great hall. 'My poor dear old master and friend.—Ah, Mr Wynyan, I have seen him for the last time.'

'No, no,' said Wynyan hoarsely; 'for Heaven's sake, don't say that!'

'I must, sir—the seal of death was on his face.'

The old man reeled and sank down in the chair, looking up piteously in his junior's eyes.

'Take my arm; I'll help you up into Mr Dalton's room. We'll send down for the chair. —Be good enough to take that chair up-stairs.'

This to one of the clerks in the lower room; and then, leaning heavily upon Wynyan's arm, old Hamber walked slowly up the two flights of stairs, and across the office into the principal's room, where he sank into a chair; but after drinking a glass of water, began to recover rapidly.

'Thank you, Mr Wynyan—thank you kindly, sir. A great shock: I did not know before that I was such a weak old man.'

'We must hope for the best, Hamber,' said Wynyan. 'Do you feel well enough now to be left?'

'Oh yes, sir; oh yes, I shall do now. You—you are going on—to Audley Street?'

'Yes, at once; I cannot stay in this suspense.'

'No: of course not. Pray, go. I can manage now;' and to prove it, the old man rose and walked out into the office, where he took his chair and leaned over the table to pick up a drawing-pen. 'There, sir, you see. I shall go on with my work.—Pray, go at once; and if you wouldn't mind, Gibbs will follow you, so that you could send me back a message in case you have to stay.'

'Of course.—Come with me, Gibbs,' said Wynyan; and taking a cab, he had himself driven to South Audley Street, where he stopped the driver about fifty yards from the house. 'Wait, Mr Gibbs,' he said; 'I will send back the news at once.'

The doctor's brougham was still at the door; but as Wynyan reached the steps, Dr Kilpatrick came out, looking haggard and old.

Wynyan's lips parted, but no words came, for he read the terrible truth in the faces of doctor and servant.

'Gone?' whispered Wynyan at last, as he stood grasping the doctor's hand.

'God help us! yes. I have lost a very dear old friend, Wynyan. Don't stop me. Doctors are not so hard-hearted as some people think. Here, come in my brougham; I'll talk to you there.'

Wynyan stood for a moment, as if dazed; then he shook his head.

'I have some one waiting—a messenger from the office,' he said in a voice almost inaudible from emotion.

'Send it, then. It was just as we reached the door.—Good-bye, Wynyan.—But stay,' he said quickly, and he caught the young man by the arm. 'You had settled the business with him, and asked him that?'

'I had not seen him till I found him lying in the fit.'

'Good heavens!' said the doctor. 'And things like that! Too late, my lad—too late!'

The doctor hurried into his carriage; and as it was driven away, Wynyan felt giddy, and then started as if from some pang. For, as he passed the front of the house, there was a strange grating noise. One of the window blinds was being drawn down, and before he had quite passed, another followed.

'My darling!' he muttered. 'The agony and despair; and I dare not venture to your side, and tell you how my heart aches for you. God help her! What must she feel!'

'How is he, sir?' said a voice, for Wynyan was passing the young draughtsman who was waiting for the message.

Wynyan looked at him curiously, and then, in an almost inaudible voice: 'Gone.—Go and tell Mr Hamber; tell all, that our best friend is dead.'

He passed on, feeling stunned. He could think of nothing but the stern, brave, toil-worn face lying there in his own room rigid for ever; and beside it, upon her knees, the child he loved, the girl for whom he had worked, and whose happiness seemed to be his one aim. Wynyan's intimacy at the house had been slight, but enough for him to see the intense affection existing between father and daughter, and now this was ended by the sudden blow.

Wynyan wanted to be alone to think—to try and recover from the stunning effects of the shock—and he walked on aimlessly, fate guiding his steps till he entered the park, and went on across the grass till he was beneath the trees, and then on and on till he let himself sink upon a seat, close to the almost forsaken ride.

But even in the comparative calm of the place where the hoofs of the horses sounded deadened, his thoughts refused to flow. He could only sit there and think of a pale agony-wrung face, with the brow resting against the bed, at whose side Rénée must be crouching then, and a low moan escaped his lips.

He was conscious then of some one looking as he passed, and seeming about to turn to him and speak—to avoid which he hurriedly left the seat and walked on to the next, where he threw himself down to try once more and think whether there were anything that he could do to lighten Rénée's terrible load.

No: nothing. She could not even know how he loved her, and at such a time to write would be an insult. What was he but her father's trusted servant? He could not write: he could not speak. He must suffer as she suffered, for her pangs were his. Some day, perhaps, she would know, but everything was in the future.

All at once there was the dull sound of trampling horses, and a voice which was familiar spoke. He looked up sharply, and his breathing seemed to cease, for there, not ten yards away, cantering gently by, were Rénée and Isabel Endoza.

The latter saw him as he rose hurriedly, and said something to Rénée, who bowed also, but she was too far on to really see him. Then the grooms, one of whom was mounted upon a powerful chestnut horse, which he had enough work to hold in, went by and they were gone, the ladies evidently increasing their pace, while for a few moments Wynyan stood motionless, unable to think as to what he ought to do.

A terrible mist—a veil—had been drawn across his brain, and the more he fought against the feeling of confusion, the darker his mental powers grew. It was as if he were in some fevered dream, and he once more sank upon the seat, and rested his heavy head in his hands. Their damp coldness had the required effect, and at last he grasped the state of affairs.

Rénée, then, had been absent, riding with her friend, who must have sought her out as soon as she knew of the return from Brighton. And now, in utter ignorance of all that had taken place, happy, joyous, and free from all portent of the horrible stroke which had fallen, she was hurrying home to that awful, darkened house.

Even then, as Wynyan grasped the facts, he did not stir. He had started to his feet, but only to stand as if paralysed for a minute or so. Then, with a cry of agony, he started off, running, taking the shortest cut he could for the great gate, and reaching it at last, panting, to hurry nearly as rapidly through the intervening space.

'Shall I be in time? Shall I be in time?' he muttered hoarsely.

The answer came as he reached the corner of the street.

Dalton's groom was leading Rénée's graceful mare slowly away, and the house seemed to be staring at him blindly with its darkened panes.

TAKA KOJI:

A NEW SUBSTITUTE FOR YEAST.

THE idea of finding a substitute for yeast seems almost sacrilegious, for yeast has been used by the human race for untold ages; but, in the words of Horace, 'nothing is too hard for mortals to accomplish,' and now we have succeeded in making the gigantic forces of steam and electricity perform humble duties for us, we are turning to the opposite end of the scale, and taming the microscopical fungi to be our willing servants. Mr Jokichi Takamine, a Japanese chemist, is the latest successful worker in this field. Whilst studying under Professor Mills, F.R.S., at Glasgow University, the possibility of improving our methods of brewing and bread-making, by finding and cultivating other fungi more efficient than yeast, occurred to Mr Takamine, and when he returned to Japan he continued to elaborate his idea, in conjunction with Professor Atkinson of Tokyo University, until he arrived at a successful conclusion.

Our knowledge of fermentation and the part played by fungi in bringing about the chemical changes we describe by that name has, indeed, been gained only within the last few years. At the beginning of the century, fermentation was such a simple matter of everyday life, that nobody troubled himself to inquire into it. Even later, it was thought by distinguished chemists, such as Liebig, to be a purely chemical phenomenon brought about by the oxidising action of the air, and to M. Pasteur belongs the honour of having discovered that fermentation was caused by the life processes of specific organisms. On the foundation supplied by this discovery, all our knowledge of fermentation and the science of bacteriology has been built up; and not only have we found out why alcohol is formed out of sugar, and why food goes bad in hot weather, but also why we suffer from epidemic diseases. Fungi differ from green plants in that they have no power of extracting carbon from the carbonic acid of the air, and all their nutriment is obtained from the more highly organised vegetable and animal matter on which they live. Ordinary fungi can only attack dead matter, the living organism being too powerful for them; but some fungi succeed in growing in the passages between the cells of the higher organisms.

Instances of this are the fungi that prey upon insects, such as the mildew that attacks flies in the autumn in our own country, and the curious plant that may be seen hanging from the large wasps in the West Indies. As a general rule, the minute class of fungi known as microbes or *bacteria*—and very few of these—are the only ones capable of attacking the blood and cells of the living animal.

Ordinary yeast, or barm as it is called in some parts of the country, is a fungus of the lowest order, and is closely related to bacteria. Under the microscope, a yeast cell appears as a yellowish egg-shaped body, full of small specks, and having generally one or two clear spaces filled with water. The cells are very small—about three thousand of them in a row would be an inch long—but not nearly so tiny as some of their cousins, the bacteria, of whom ten times as many would be required to make up the length of an inch. If one of these yeast cells is placed in a solution of sugar and kept moderately warm, it commences to grow. In this process it does not get appreciably bigger, but a small bulge in the wall of the cell appears, which soon enlarges to a bud, and, almost before it has attained to its full size, this bud begins to give off buds of its own; so that, in a short time, instead of one yeast cell, we have long strings of them growing through the liquid in every direction. To the naked eye, the solution appears turbid, and small bubbles keep rising to the surface, so that after a time a scum forms, and the whole mass is stirred up by the gas it is giving off. What is really happening all the time is that yeast is splitting up the sugar into alcohol and carbonic acid gas. Other things are formed at the same time in small quantity, including glycerine and the heavier alcohols that we call fusel oil, containing more atoms of carbon than ordinary alcohol. All the sugar is not converted into ordinary alcohol and carbonic acid, because the yeast, in growing, uses some of it to build up the new cells.

During the process of fermentation, the solution gets quite warm: the yeast cells give out heat in a similar way to human beings, only the heat of the latter is obtained by burning the carbon or charcoal of their food slowly in the oxygen they take in by their lungs, whilst the yeast cells keep themselves warm by means of the chemical heat given out when sugar is split up into alcohol and carbonic acid. In fact, from a mechanical point of view, the yeast cell and the human being are merely more or less complicated heat-engines. Curiously, cane-sugar or beet-sugar—the same substance chemically—is not fermentable directly by yeast, that is, the yeast cannot feed on ordinary sugar, so it has to convert it first of all into fruit-sugar, or grape-sugar. This is accomplished by means of another ferment present with the yeast. This substance is not alive like yeast, but is what scientific people call an 'unorganised ferment,' resembling the similar substance manufactured by the glands of our own digestive systems. These unorganised ferments, whose action is not thoroughly understood, are purely chemical bodies that can sometimes be separated in actual crystals like salt or sugar. When they are introduced amongst materials subject to their action, they seem to work mechanically, so that the complicated chemical particles tumble over them, as it were, and get split up into simpler compounds.

In brewing beer, we have again to start with a substance that is unfermentable—barley. The first thing to be done is to convert it into something that will ferment, and here another unorganised ferment comes into play. This material is called diastase, and occurs naturally in the barley, and, in fact, in all seeds. It is the weapon used by the embryo plant to convert the stores of insoluble nourishment, principally starch, into soluble matter that it can use in growing. If the seeds are moistened and put in a warm place, they will begin to germinate, and the diastase will act on the starch and convert it into sugar. This is what happens in the process called malting; the seeds are allowed to grow until the diastase has changed most of the starch into sugar, and then the growth is stopped by subjecting the malt to dry heat, so that the tiny seedlings are withered and killed. The malt is now put into a huge tub, called a mash-tun, and treated with hot water, which extracts the sugar and everything else that will dissolve, and the liquor is then boiled with hops. The diastase will not stand heating beyond a certain point, and is killed in this process. The wort, as the liquor is called, is then cooled down to 60 degrees Fahrenheit, and run into the fermenting vats, where yeast acts upon it in the way we have described. When the yeast has used up all the sugar, it stops working. Just before this stage has been reached, the beer is run into barrels and allowed to stand, so that nearly the whole of the yeast works out through the bung-hole, and is caught in troughs placed for the purpose. Isinglass or finings are then introduced to filter off and carry down to the bottom any remaining cells of yeast, so that the liquor is bright and clear. English beer is allowed to ferment at a temperature of 70 degrees Fahrenheit, but Continental beer is brewed on quite a different principle, the wort being cooled down to a much lower temperature, which is never allowed to rise appreciably. The consequence is that, instead of growing in long strings through the liquid, the German yeast grows on the sides and bottoms of the vats, and the fermentation takes much longer than in England. The substances produced also are rather different. It is not the alcohol in beer that makes people stupid and heavy, but a substance called furfurol, which is formed in small quantities at the high temperature at which English beer is fermented; Lager, Munich, and other Continental beers contain practically none of this injurious substance, and much larger quantities of them can be drunk with impunity.

Now we have described the main processes of brewing, we will return to the fungi that cause the fermentation and describe the new ferment of Mr Takamine. It has been known for many years that, besides the different kinds of yeast, certain moulds can convert sugar into alcohol, and can be made to work in the same manner as yeast. For instance, the brown mould known as *mucor*, that may be seen growing in long white threads covered with a brownish powder on different material, is one of these. Mucor is higher in the scale than yeast, for it multiplies in a somewhat similar manner to a flowering plant, instead of by the method of budding alone. When growing in the ordinary way, the long threads on the surface of the cultivating medium are seen under the microscope to be long branched tubes, divided at intervals by transverse septa, and filled with similar material to that found in the yeast cell. From these interlocking tubes, upright tubes are given off here and there, carrying brown masses of spores or seeds at the top; whilst other tubes descend like rootlets into the liquid or other material on which the fungus grows. Now, if the fungus, instead of being allowed to thrive on the surface of a liquid, is submerged, a remarkable change takes place in its mode of growth: the tubes break up into short lengths, which soon become rounded, and, if placed in a sugar solution, begin to bud in long strings. They break up the sugar into alcohol and carbonic acid, and behave in every way like true yeast, so that there is no distinguishing between them.

The problem Mr Takamine set himself was to find a fungus that would act in this way, but in a far more efficient manner than yeast, and, in addition to that, would render the wasteful and unsatisfactory process of malting unnecessary. He tried various kinds of fungi, including all ordinary ferments known both to the eastern and western worlds, including many kinds of bacteria, but without marked success, until he experimented with an obscure fungus known as *Eurotium oryzæ*, belonging to the mildew family, which, on due cultivation, did all that was required of it. It was found that boiled bran was the best soil to grow the fungus in. The plant spreads on the flakes with great rapidity, and if highly cultivated by the aid of chemical fertilisers, it produces what correspond to flowers; but this is not the best condition for obtaining the ferment, and when grown for commercial purposes, no fertilisers are used, and the fungus is cultivated at a lower temperature. In this latter state, the rootlets are covered with minute crystals of diastase, and the unripe seeds or spores are the active agents in producing fermentation. Thus we have the diastase ready to convert the starch into sugar without any malting, and, in brewing, the ground barley will only have to be mixed with a certain quantity of water and sufficiency of the new ferment, Taka Koji, as its inventor has christened it. Besides the saving of ground, space, time, and labour that will be effected by employing a ferment that is able to do its own malting, there will be a large saving of material, for the seedlings of the barley use up a part of the starch in their own growth before they are killed in the drying chamber of the malt-house.

Another property of the Taka Koji, although not important in brewing beer, will be immensely valuable to whisky distillers. Ordinary yeast cannot go on working after the alcohol in the solution reaches 12 to 14 per cent., but Taka Koji will work up to 20 per cent., so that distillers will be able to use much stronger worts than they do at present. It has the advantage, also, that it produces no fusel oil, and no furfurol, the poisonous substance we spoke of just now. We may remark that, in making whisky, practically the same operations are gone through as in brewing beer, except that no hops are added. Afterwards, the fermented liquor is distilled, and as alcohol is more volatile than water, the distillate contains much more alcohol than the original liquor. The better-class whiskies are made in pot stills—that is, earthenware stills in which the whisky is distilled twice to bring it up to the proper strength. Cheaper whiskies and all other European spirits are manufactured in what are called 'patent' stills. The condensing worms of these stills are so arranged that the more volatile alcohol passes over to the receiver, whilst the greater part of the water is condensed and separated from the spirit, only one distillation being required. The pot-still whisky contains more fusel oil, and requires a longer time to mature than the other, but the resulting product is more palatable owing to the fusel oil breaking up into ethers, which improve the flavour of the spirit.

There is, however, a more important field for Taka Koji than brewing or distilling—namely, bread-making. Unless we are much mistaken, the new ferment will replace yeast entirely before long for this purpose. Taka Koji is such a vigorous ferment, and so certain in its action, that it will give much better results than yeast, for it will be able to hold its own against the lower organisms that cause bread to turn sour. These are often present with yeast, and cause the loss of many a good batch of bread and many a good brew of beer.

In connection with the new ferment, a few words about extract of malt may prove interesting. Malt extract is valuable to invalids, partly on account of the actual nourishment—sugar and nitrogenous matter—but principally owing to the diastase contained in it. This diastase enables a person of weak digestion to assimilate bread, rice, and other starchy matters, for the diastase digests them for him. The best malt extracts are made by extracting malt with water not hot enough to kill the diastase, and then evaporating it down to a treacle-like consistency in vacuum pans at a low temperature. A good malt extract should digest many times its weight of cooked starch in a few hours, and there are several brands in the market that will do this; but many others are absolutely worthless. By a simple method of washing, the diastase can be dissolved out of the Taka Koji, leaving the yeast-like ferment behind. The diastase is thrown out of solution by alcohol, and it can then be compressed into tabloids, or any other suitable form, so that invalids can make sure of obtaining the digestive assistance they require in a pure form, without the possibility of being imposed upon by worthless extracts of malt.

The interesting point about the discovery to those who are watching the advance of science, is not the actual material victory that has been gained, but the hope of still greater progress in the same direction. This useful ferment is of precisely the same order as the bacterial ferment that turns our milk sour by converting the milk sugar into lactic acid, and is own brother to the mildew that ruins the hops, and another mildew that preys on the vines. The flavour and digestibility of cheese, for example, depend entirely on proper fermentation, and there is a magnificent opportunity here for finding a new ferment, or series of ferments, that can be depended upon. In the disposal of sewage and refuse, also, much might be done in securing proper fungi, which would at least destroy the germs of disease. Indeed, there seems to be no doubt that as much may be gained by studying and cultivating these lower forms of vegetation, as has been done in converting the wild vegetation of field and forest into the hundreds of useful plants that fill garden and orchard with blossom and fruit.

THE CAPTAIN MORATTI'S LAST AFFAIR.

CHAPTER III.—FELICITÀ.

Some few days after his interview with Di Lippo, the Captain Guido Moratti rode his horse across the old Roman bridge which at that time spanned the Avella, and directed his way towards the castle of Pieve, whose outlines rose before him, cresting an eminence about a league from the bridge. The captain was travelling as a person of some quality, the better to carry out a plan he had formed for gaining admission to Pieve, and a lackey rode behind him holding his valise. He had hired horse and man in Florence, and the servant was an honest fellow enough, in complete ignorance of his master's character and profession. Both the captain and his man bore the appearance of long travel, and in truth they had journeyed with a free rein; and now that a stormy night was setting in, they were not a little anxious to reach their point. The snow was falling in soft flakes, and the landscape was gray with the driving mist, through which the outlines of the castle loomed large and shadowy, more like a fantastic creation in cloud-land than the work of human hands. As the captain pulled down the lapels of his cap to ward off the drift which was coming straight in his face, the bright flare of a beacon fire shone from a tower of the castle, and the rays from it stretched on broad orange bands athwart the rolling mist, which threatened, together with the increasing darkness, to extinguish all the view that was left, and make the league to Pieve a road of suffering. With the flash of the fire a weird, sustained howl came to the travellers in an eerie cadence; and as the fear-some call died away, it was picked up by an answering cry from behind, then another and yet another. There could be no mistaking these signals; they meant pressing and immediate danger.

'Wolves!' shouted Moratti; and turning to his knave: 'Gallop, Tito!—else our bones will be picked clean by morning. Gallop!'

They struck their spurs into the horses; and the jaded animals, as if realising their peril, made a brave effort, and dashed off at their utmost speed. It was none too soon, for the wolves, hitherto following in silence, had given tongue at the sight of the fire; and as if knowing that the beacon meant safety for their prey, and that they were like to lose a dinner unless they hurried, laid themselves on the track of the flying horses with a hideous chorus of yells. They could not be seen for the mist; but they were not far behind. They were going at too great a pace to howl now; but an occasional angry 'yap' reached the riders, and reached the horses too, whose instinct told them what it meant; and they needed no further spurring to make them strain every muscle to put a distance between themselves and their pursuers. Moratti thoroughly grasped the situation. He had experienced a similar adventure in the Pennine Alps when carrying despatches for Paolo Orsini, with this difference, that then he had a fresh horse and could see where he was going; whereas now, although the distance to Pieve was short, and in ten minutes he might be safe and with a whole skin, yet a false step, a stumble, and nothing short of a miracle could prevent him becoming a living meal to the beasts behind.

He carried, slung by a strap over his shoulder, a light bugle, which he had often found useful before, but never so useful as now. Thrusting his hand under his cloak, he drew it out, and blew a long clear blast; and, to his joy, there came an answer through the storm from the castle. Rescue was near at hand, and faster and faster they flew; but as surely the wolves gained on them, and they could hear the snarling of the leaders as they jostled against and snapped at each other in their haste. Moratti looked over his shoulder. He could see close behind a dark crescent moving towards them with fearful rapidity. He almost gave a groan. It was too horrible to die thus! And he dug his spurs again and again into the heaving flanks of his horse, with the vain hope of increasing its speed. They had now reached the ascent to Pieve. They could see the lights at the windows. In two hundred yards there was safety; when Moratti's horse staggered under him, and he had barely time to free his feet from the stirrups and lean well back in the saddle ere the animal came down with a plunge. Tito went by like a flash, as the captain picked himself up and faced the wolves, sword in hand. There was a steep bank on the side of the road. He made a dash to gain the summit of this; but had hardly reached half-way up when the foremost wolf was upon him, and had rolled down again with a yell, run through the heart. His fellows tore him to shreds, and in a moment began to worry at the struggling horse, whose fore-leg was broken. In a hand-turn the matter was ended, and the wretched beast was no longer visible, all that could be seen being a black swaying mass of bodies, as the pack hustled and fought over the dead animal.

Nevertheless, there were three or four of the wolves who devoted their attention to Moratti, and he met them with the courage of despair. But the odds were too many, and he began to feel that he could not hold out much longer. One huge monster, his shaggy coat icy with the sleet, had pulled him to his knees, and it was only a lucky thrust of the dagger he held in his left hand that saved him. He regained his feet only to be dragged down again, and to rise yet once more. He was bleeding and weak, wounded in many places, and the end could not be far off. It was not thus that he had hoped to die; and he was dying like a worried lynx.

The thought drove him to madness. He was of Siena, and somewhere in his veins, though he did not know it, ran the blood of the Senonian Gauls, and it came out now—he went Berserker, as the old northern pirates were wont to do. Sliding down the bank, he jumped full into the pack, striking at them in a dumb fury. He was hardly human himself now, and he plunged his sword again and again into the heaving mass around him, and felt no pain from the teeth of the wolves as they rent his flesh. A fierce mad joy came upon him. It was a glorious fight after all, and he was dying game. It was a glorious fight, and when he felt a grisly head at his throat, and the weight of his assailant brought him down once more, he flung aside his sword, and grappling his enemy with his hands, tore asunder the huge jaws, and flung the body from him with a yell. Almost at that very instant there was the sharp report of firearms, the rush of hurrying feet, and the blaze of torches. Moratti, half on his knees, was suddenly pulled to his feet by a strong hand, and supported by it he stood, dizzy and faint, bleeding almost everywhere, but safe. The wolves had fled in silence, vanishing like phantoms across the snow; and shot after shot was fired in their direction by the rescue party.

'Per Bacco!' said the man who was holding

Moratti up; 'but it was an affair between the skin and the flesh, signore—steady!' and his arm tightened round the captain. As he did this, a long defiant howl floated back to them through the night, and Guido Moratti knew no more. He seemed to have dropped suddenly into an endless night. He seemed to be flying through space, past countless millions of stars, which, bright themselves, were unable to illumine the abysmal darkness around, and then—there was nothing.

When Moratti came to himself again, he was lying in a bed, in a large room, dimly lighted by a shaded lamp, set on a tall Corinthian pillar of marble. After the first indistinct glance around him, he shut his eyes, and was lost in a dreamy stupor. In a little, he looked again, and saw that the chamber was luxuriously fitted, and that he was not alone, for, kneeling at a *prie-dieu*, under a large picture of a Madonna and Child, was the figure of a woman. Her face was from him; but ill as he was, Moratti saw that the fitting dress showed a youthful and perfect figure, and that her head was covered with an abundance of red gold hair. The man was still in the shadowland caused by utter weakness, and for a moment he thought that this was nothing but a vision of fancy; but he rallied half unconsciously, and looked again; and then, curiosity overcoming him, attempted to turn so as to obtain a better view, and was checked by a twinge of pain, which coming suddenly, brought an exclamation to his lips. In an instant the lady rose, and moving towards him, bent over the bed. As she did this, their eyes met, and the fierce though dulled gaze of the bravo saw before him a face of ideal innocence, of such saint-like purity, that it might have been a dream of Raffaelle. She placed a cool hand on his hot forehead, and whispered softly: 'Be still—and drink this—you will sleep.' Turning to a side table, she lifted a silver goblet therefrom, and gave him to drink. The draught was cool and refreshing, and he gathered strength from it.

'Where am I?' he asked; and then, with a sudden courtesy, 'Madonna—pardon me—I thank you.'

'Hush!' she answered, lifting a small hand. 'You are in Pieve, and you have been very ill. But I must not talk—sleep now, signore.'

'I remember now,' he said dreamily—'the wolves; but it seems so long ago.'

She made no reply, but stepped softly out of the room, and was gone. Moratti would have called out after her; but a drowsiness came on him, and closing his eyes, he slept.

It takes a strong man some time to recover from wounds inflicted by a wild animal; and when a man has, like Guido Moratti, lived at both ends, it takes longer still, and it was weeks before the captain was out of danger. He never saw his fair visitor again. Her place was taken by a staid and middle-aged nurse, and he was visited two or three times daily by a solemn-looking physician. But although he did not see her whom he longed to see, there was a message both morning and evening from the Count of Pieve and his daughter, hoping the invalid was better—the former regretting that his infirmities prevented his paying a personal visit, and the inquiries of the latter being always accompanied by a bouquet of winter flowers. But strange as it may seem, when he was under the influence of the opiate they gave him nightly, he was certain of the presence of the slight graceful figure of the lady of the *prie-dieu* as he called her to himself. He saw again the golden red hair and the sweet eyes, and felt again the touch of the cool hand. He began to think that this bright presence which lit his dreams was but a vision after all, and used to long for the night and the opiate.

At last one fine morning Tito appeared, and began to set out and brush the captain's apparel as if nothing had ever happened. Moratti watched him for a space, and then rising up against his pillows spoke: 'Tito!'

'Signore!'

'How is it that you have not been here before?'

'I was not allowed, Excellency, until to-day—your worship was too ill.'

'Then I am better.'

'Excellency.'

There was a silence of some minutes, and the captain spoke again: 'Tito!'

'Signore!'

'Have you seen the Count and his daughter?'

'Signore!'

'What are they like?'

'The Count old, and a cripple. Madonna Felicità, small, thin, red-haired like my wife Sancia.'

Moratti sank down again upon the bed, a satisfied smile upon his lips. So there was truth in his dreams. The vision of the night was a reality. He would see her soon, as soon as he could rise, and he was fast getting well, very fast. He had gone back many years in his illness. He had thoughts stirred within him that he had imagined dead long ago. He was the last man to day-dream, to build castles in the air; but as he lay idly watching Tito, who was evidently very busy cleaning something—for he was sitting on a low chair with his back towards the captain, and his elbow moving backwards and forwards rapidly—the bravo pictured himself Guido Moratti as he might have been, a man able to look all men in the face, making an honourable way for himself, and worthy the love of a good woman. The last thought brought before him a fair face and sweet eyes, and a dainty head crowned with red gold hair, and the strong man let his fancy run on with an uprising of infinite tenderness in his heart. He was lost in a cloudland of dreams.

'Signore!'

Tito's harsh voice had pulled down the castle in Spain, and Tito himself was standing at the bedside holding a bright and glittering dagger in his hand. But he had done more than upset his master's dreams. He had, all unwittingly, brought him back in a flash to the hideous reality, for, as a consequence of his long illness, of the weeks of fever and delirium, Moratti had clean forgotten the dreadful object of his coming to Pieve. It all came back to him with a blinding suddenness, and he closed his eyes with a shudder of horror as Tito laid the poniard upon the bed, asking: 'Will the signore see if the blade is keen enough? A touch of the finger will suffice.'

NOVEL SHIPS.

The attempt which M. Bazin is just now making to construct a steamship which shall roll over the water instead of being forced through it, will recall to mind many schemes of the past for revolutionising ocean navigation. Chimerical as the proposed vessel appears, the principle involved—that of propulsion by means of an immersed smooth cylinder—is not in itself an impossibility, for at least ten years ago an English admiral conducted some experiments upon this identical system. These experiments proved that if a smooth roller were driven at a very high speed, it would literally take hold of the water by friction as if it were a rope, but the losses caused by slipping were tremendous. No doubt, in smooth water a vessel could be propelled in this way and be stable; but one perched upon enormous cylinders would be a dangerous and disagreeable thing to be on board of in rough water.

Fads in shipbuilding seem to date from the seventeenth century, when a Dutch merchant gave orders for a vessel to be constructed for him like the pictorial representations of Noah's Ark. The shipping folk in the town where he resided jeered at him for his eccentric idea; but when the craft was completed, and she was found capable of carrying a third more cargo than other owners' ships, and no extra men were required to work her, the laugh changed sides. Probably this is the only instance on record of a 'fad' turning out successful when put to a practical test. In 1814, William Doncaster patented what he described as being 'the first hydrostatic ship which has ever appeared upon the habitable globe.' It consisted of five pontoons, sharp pointed, to divide the displaced water, so that she would rise well to the waves. Four water-wheels were fixed fore and aft, between pontoons one and two, and four and five, through which the water ran to propel the vessel. This invention, as might readily be imagined, proved to be of no use whatever.

What seems to have been the earliest attempt in using large drums as the means of propelling vessels was the invention of Mr Frederick Sang, of London, who in 1853 took out several patents covering various designs of this character. However, his drums were furnished with paddles, fixed either in the ordinary way, or movable on the principle of the feathering paddles. Many years later, some of the foregoing principles appeared in the 'Fryer Buoyant Propeller,' or three-wheel wagon. The wheels were hollow spheroids, holding the bed of the car or ship, above and entirely out of the reach of waves. These spheroids were not only the buoyant and supporting parts, but by their triangular position ensured stability, and provided the motive-power, rows of flanges on both sides of each wheel catching the water like a finely feathered oar. Each spheroid was capable of independent rotation, assuring handiness and safety even without a rudder. Another inventor took the porpoise as a model for a ship, and endeavoured to show how she could be made to travel at the rate of one hundred miles an hour. The basis of the argument was, that the porpoise only used the equivalent to one horse-power to cut through the water at twenty-five miles an hour. Of the two-hulled *Castalia*, built in 1874; the *Bessemer*, with a swinging saloon, in 1875; and the *Calais-Douvres* of 1877, so much has already been written, that it seems needless to do more than mention them in this article.

Great things were expected to result from the introduction of the Aqua-aërial or wave-ship, but nothing has been heard of the invention for some years now. The vessel was designed with a view of doing away with the causes of sea-sickness, and to attain railway speed at sea, combined with safety and steadiness. She was a broad flat-bottomed structure with a semicircular bow, and had three keels, screw propellers, and a steam-engine. Except at the stern, the vessel did not rest upon the water, but upon a layer of air, introduced by means of funnels installed upon the deck. The three keels, besides diminishing the rolling, retained between them the air introduced below the hull, and prevented it from escaping at the sides. As the speed of the vessel developed, so the shallow draught, it was stated, decreased. The propellers were entirely submerged. Instead of ploughing its way through the water, the ship was to skim along or over the surface, in order to avoid wave-making, and thus get rid of the resistance of a large body of water. By means of this invention, the journey to New York and back was to be effected in six days.

The *Ocean Palace* steamship was patented by Mr Robert Wilcox, of Melbourne, Australia, the claims for which ranked themselves under the heads of speed, safety, and comfort. Double hulls were used, but each of them was divided into two cigar-shaped portions, thus giving to the submerged whole a quadruplicate character. The design was intended to give the least resistance, with the greatest buoyancy and stability. A couple of drums were placed fore and aft between the hulls, which were to be driven by the engines as if they were paddle-wheels. Over these drums was placed a continuous band of iron links, upon which paddles were fixed. It was claimed that this vessel would be able to run from Melbourne to London in twenty-six days.

In 1883 Captain William Coppin, who built the first large screw steamer which crossed the ocean, designed a new style of vessel, models of which were exhibited at Boston, U.S.A. It was a compound ship, composed of three hulls fastened together, the whole being decked over. The outer hulls were of narrow beam and of equal length; and a much shorter hull was placed in the centre space between the two longer vessels. The three hulls were rigidly connected by iron or steel bulkheads, box-girders, and steel decks or frames, in such a way as to form complete platforms or decks, so as to leave considerable extra spaces between the ships. The centre ship carried the engines, and was provided with a propeller at each end. All three hulls tapered from the centre, both vertically and longitudinally, and came to a rounded point at both ends, so as to enter the wave and reduce the pitching motion to a minimum, the rolling motion being done away with by the extent of water-spaces between the ships. The platforms or decks extended about three-fifths of the whole length of the outside ships in the centre, and the remaining portions of the ends, forward and aft, were covered over for passing through the waves, but the space between was not decked over. Stability, safety, and speed were claimed for vessels so constructed, and the design was stated to have been approved by eminent naval men.

Two years later, M. Emil Adam, of Prague, Austria, designed a strange-looking craft, with which astonishing results were obtained. The inventor set out to reduce the resistance of the water as much as possible, and for this purpose constructed the hull of his vessel of two hollow cylinders, which were tapered from the middle toward both ends, whereby a ship resembling in shape a cigar was obtained. Each cylinder was provided on its outer surface with a screw thread, formed of metal plates riveted on the cylinder, the line of inclination of the thread being about forty-five degrees to the longitudinal axis of the cylinder. Annular recesses or breaks were formed in the cylinders, at suitable intervals, for the bearings supporting the frame of the vessel. The cylinders were rotated by a suitable engine, on the deck or platform of the vessel. The water in which the cylinders revolved acted as a nut for the screw threads, enabling a rapid motion to be obtained in either direction, especially as the frame, decks, &c., were entirely above the surface of the water, and thus offered little or no resistance.

Probably the only vessel of its kind in the world was built at Christianstad, in Sweden, in 1890. It could be propelled on land by means of its own engines, and was intended for the traffic on two lakes close to Boras, which were separated by a strip of land. Rails were laid between the two lakes, and the steamer was to run itself across from one lake to the other. When tried at the works, the vessel fulfilled the tests very well. The engine was of ten horse-power, and the boat could accommodate some sixty passengers. Another original craft was the steamship *Louvre*, built at Nantes, in France, about three years ago. She was the first ocean vessel provided with two central propellers, which were placed underneath the middle of the hull instead of at the stern. It was claimed that by this means a steamer could remain at sea during the most terrific weather without any danger being incurred. The *Louvre* ran regularly between Paris and Nantes, calling at Brest. Quite recently, a patent was granted in London for a ship the propulsion of which was to be ensured under all circumstances, being fitted with both screw propellers and paddle-wheels, driven by independent engines, while another one was secured for steamers convertible into traction-engines!

Mr Edison is now reported to be at work with a plan to grease the sides of ships, so that they will slip through the water more readily. He says that the friction of salt water and its constituents is much more than is generally believed; and if he can only do what he thinks possible, the *Campania* will be enabled to travel from Liverpool to New York in four days. Curiously enough, several inventors have designed steamships which were stated to be capable of performing this voyage in four, four and a half, and five days; but it is a matter of doubt whether the rapid runs already made by vessels of the ordinary type will ever be reduced to any appreciable extent, due regard being paid to safety during all weathers.

Want of space alone prevents details being given of Mr Jolly's *Ark Saloon;* Mr Gadd's 'loose sections;' Captain Bleven's 'dome ship;' Mr Davison's ship; Mississippi Company's vessels with double hulls and drop keels; Mr Shone's non-sinkable ship; Mr Graham's steamer with nine hulls; Signor Brin's ship; Mr Fryer's *Arrow* type; Mr Hodgett's patent ship; Mr Lincoln's 'tapering' hull, and several others, all of which possess peculiarities of more or less utility.

W. B. L.

GENTLEMAN JERRY:

OR, HOW THE KRAAL WAS SAVED.

It was a dull and cheerless day. The rain was sputtering down viciously upon the greasy pavements and filling the gutters, in each of which ran a drumly rivulet, swift and froth-topped. The few passers-by looked damp and miserable as they hurried on their way, and took no notice of the tall, spare figure muffled in a military greatcoat who was marching up and down the pavement at the regulation pace. The knot of coloured ribbons falling soaked and limp from his forage cap proclaimed him to be a recruiting sergeant; but there seemed nothing for him to recruit beyond a half-starved, wholly bedraggled mongrel, which was carrying on investigations round an empty ash bucket. Old Sergeant Dreadnought had been deserted by his companions, who had sought refuge in a neighbouring public, where many a Queen's shilling had been converted, like many an ordinary one, into the glass that both cheers and inebriates. The sergeant was used to being deserted, however, for he was an observant man, and had often noticed that his largest hauls—and he was famed for large hauls—had been made on wet and dismal days, and he made a point of being at his post in all kinds of weather.

For once, however, the sergeant seemed to be wrong. It was growing dusk, and not a single aspirant for military glory had he interviewed that live-long damp and dirty day. He had even made up his mind to desert the cold pavement and cheer his inner man by a glass of grog, when, as he turned to put his resolution into effect, he saw something which caused him to stop short and resume his measured tramp. This something was the figure of a man who had appeared at a corner on the opposite side of the street; and the well-practised eye of old Dreadnought had recognised in him a likely prey. The man was young, tall, and broad, but evidently much thinner than he once had been, or else his clothes—and sorry clothes they were—would not have hung so loosely on his great frame. They were soaked with rain, and the man shivered as a gust of east wind caught him at the corner and nipped and buffeted him, seemingly in wild delight at having at length found a being in this quarter who was susceptible to its attack, for it had done its best all day with the gaunt, gray-coated individual on the other side of the street, but apparently without the least effect.

The man glanced across the road, and evidently caught sight of the sergeant and his ribbons, for he hesitated a moment, then, as the old soldier watched him out of a corner of his eye, he produced from somewhere in his ragged trousers a halfpenny, and that only after a careful search. Balancing it on his thumbnail, he tossed it upwards and let it fall on the pavement; then picking it up, he began rapidly to cross the road.

The sergeant, who had been an interested spectator of this performance, straightened himself, or rather went through the motions to produce such a result, for he was already as straight as it is possible for a man with an ordinary built spine to be, cleared his throat, and put an extra twist on his moustache, then turned to meet the stranger.

Old Dreadnought had in his time enlisted many a queer customer, but, as he said afterwards, 'Never in all my life 'ad I seed sich a sad look on a man's face. He seemed as if he 'ad swallowed his grog without a-tasting of it.'

The young man came straight up to the sergeant, and without any preliminary, quietly said: 'I wish to enlist, if you please.'

'You do, my lad; then come along wi' me.'

They adjourned to the public, and many were the remarks the old sergeant had passed upon him by his fellow-recruiters for stealing a march upon them; but he was well used to their banter, and proceeded to administer to himself and to his latest capture a stiff glass of whisky and water. The new recruit turned out to be a very silent fellow, for he answered all questions as shortly as possible, and seemed disinclined for company. He gave his name as Jeremy Tobin; his age as four-and-twenty, but he looked nearer thirty; beyond that, there was little information to be got out of him; and he was finally left to himself, as 'a surly sort of cuss,' though the men pitied him, his face was so careworn and sad.

The 'surly cuss' was placed in the company of recruits which I had the honour and misfortune to lick into shape, and a sorry lot they were.

Jeremy Tobin was by a long way the best of them both as regarded physique and intelligence; and partly on this account, and partly because of his strange, settled melancholy, I took an interest in him and watched him closely. He was a fine-looking man when shaved and decently dressed; and under the combined influence of warm clothes and good food, he showed up as a very powerfully built fellow, well over six feet, and with the chest and limbs of a Hercules. But though he thus improved as regarded his outer man, his demeanour never altered. I had seen many a gloomy and miserable recruit, but they always cheered up or deserted in the course of a month or two; not so Gentleman Jerry, as he had been dubbed.

Polite at all times, and eager for his work, he seldom spoke unless spoken to, and was never known to smile. Indeed, 'as glum as Gentleman Jerry' came to be quite a proverb in the regiment; and though at first his comrades rallied him on the subject, they soon wearied of it, and he was allowed to 'gang his ain gait.' I did my best to win his confidence; but beyond a 'Thank you, sir, you are very kind,' he would tell me nothing, even when I once came upon him with a letter in his hands, sobbing like a child, and begged him to let me help him.

Once only, to my certain knowledge, did Jeremy Tobin rouse himself, and then it was a rousing with a vengeance. We were in camp at the time, and Jeremy, while taking a solitary stroll, had come upon a great, coarse brute of a fellow unmercifully flogging a little drummer boy belonging to our regimental band. This man, who was a corporal in another regiment, had the reputation of being a terrible bully, and was without doubt one of the strongest men in Her Majesty's service. He was inflicting chastisement on the little drummer for daring to assert that 'our regiment could lick his hollow at any mortal thing.' Gentleman Jerry had taken the surprised bully by the collar, and dragged him off the boy by main force; then loosing his hold of him, he had calmly requested the boy to tell his version of the affair. The little chap blubbered out his story, and then Jeremy had politely asked the bully to give him his version. Finding he had none to give, Gentleman Jerry had straightway stripped off his coat and gone for him on the spot, saying never a word, but pounding the man in a terribly cool and scientific, not to say effective fashion; after which he had donned his coat and strolled away as if nothing had happened, but gaining for himself the respect and admiration of his comrades, while the boy he had rescued worshipped him from afar.

If, however, we had hopes that this little incident might brighten up Jeremy Tobin, we were doomed to be disappointed, for he fell back into his old ways again, sober, moody, and glum, and so he continued till affairs in South Africa summoned us to Portsmouth, and thence to the Cape.

. . . . . .

Day was breaking over the veldt, but early though it was, the outpost was up and stirring. It was no time to lie abed when the main column was miles away across the river, and bands of Zulus were scouring the country, 'seeking whom they might devour;' and if one happened to be located as we were in an old kraal on the slope of a low hill rising steep and grass-covered from the plain, defended merely by a double row of palisades, a couple of field-pieces, and a score or so of infantry of the line, there was all the greater need for incessant care and watchfulness, if we ever hoped to see the shores of 'Merry England' once again.

Why there was any need for such a place to be defended at all, was a fact which might have puzzled wiser heads than ours; but there were many things in the course of that fatal war which never were and never will be explained, and thus it was that we officers stretched ourselves, and yawned, and blinked, and finally rose for our morning cup of coffee and round of daily labour, which consisted for the most part of scrutinising the surrounding plain and hills through our field-glasses, eating, drinking, and sleeping with what good-will we might.

For a whole week we had been cooped up, getting no news save what our two Kaffir scouts brought in, and that did not amount to much, and we wearied with an exceeding weariness of the monotony of outpost duty. Little did we think that the end of it, and to not a few of us the end of all things, was rapidly approaching, for Cherry-beak, one of our scouts, a little fuzzy-haired mortal with a fiery red nose—hence his high-sounding name—had come in the previous night with news that all was quiet and the country apparently deserted. It was true that his companion, Knobby—short for Knob-nose—had not yet returned; but there was nothing peculiar in this, and we were somewhat surprised when our orderly informed us that our worthy scout had been sighted making for the kraal at a pace which he did not usually affect. We brisked up at this, and eagerly awaited his arrival, discussing in the meantime what this piece of information might portend.

'The beggar is hungry, depend upon it,' drawled Jones, our young sub.; 'never knew such a man as Knobby for his breakfast—that's the meaning of his quick travelling, I'll bet.'

'Jones, man,' said our captain, a worthy Scot with a fund of dry humour, 'ye must not be always judging folk by yourself; but, speaking seriously, I fear this means something more than breakfast to Knobby; and the worst of it is, in the event of an attack, we have not any great store of ammunition, thanks to Tobin; still, it may merely be a scare, and whatever you do, don't let the men hear about the cartridges.—But here is Knobby and the news!'

Knobby was a Swazi by birth, a tall, well-built man, a good scout, and a splendid runner, but it was evident, from his distressed breathing, that he had had about enough of it on the present occasion. He saluted, and was about to make his report, when Captain Forbes beckoned him to follow, and accompanied by myself as senior lieutenant, made his way into the hut which served as the officers' quarters. Then Knobby told his tale.

Some ten miles to the north, he had come upon a small 'impi' encamped, evidently a detachment from a larger body, and had learned that they were on the way to our kraal, though, apparently, they were unaware that we were in possession. He had managed to steal away unperceived, and had run at full speed back to the outpost to give us timely warning.

'How many might there be?' Knobby had counted them. There were three hundred young warriors, and they would be here in a few hours at the most, for their halt had merely been a temporary one.

It was a pleasant prospect! Here were we, not much over forty men all told, with a decidedly small stock of ammunition, waiting in an old kraal far away from the British lines for an attack from three hundred fighting men of one of Cetewayo's most famous regiments, led by a young but ambitious and clever warrior; for Knobby had, thanks to the long grass, got close enough to learn details. Well, there was nothing for it but to make the best of it, though we took care to send Cherry-beak off with a message to the column. It was not the numbers we cared so much about, for we were behind stockades; it was the cartridges.

'Confound that mad fellow!' muttered the captain as we left the hut. 'What possessed him to meddle with the ammunition? But for that, we might have laughed at them.'

'If his madness has added to his strength, he may be of use yet,' I answered, 'especially if it comes to close quarters.'

'Use! look at him; what use do you think can be made of that man?'

In a corner of the little enclosure sat a strange-looking figure, a huge, heavily-built man, his head sunk forward on his chest. He was busily engaged in making a mud-pie, as engrossed in this occupation as if he had been a child of six instead of a great stalwart soldier.

Zululand had not dealt kindly with Gentleman Jerry.

On the march up country he had been struck down with sunstroke, and though he rapidly recovered at the time, he had afterwards seemed more gloomy and silent than ever. Then, a couple of days before we left the main column, a letter arrived which had greatly distressed him. Still he was well enough, and seemed glad when he was allowed to accompany the detachment; but none of us had been much surprised when, two days after we had reached the kraal, Gentleman Jerry was found laughing and gibbering to himself as he sat bareheaded in the sun. It was a more serious matter, however, when we found that he had gained an entrance to the hut in which our precious stock of ball cartridge was stored, and had destroyed as much as he could lay hands on, tearing open the cases and using the powder for his own ends—namely, mixing it with water and making fizzing cones of it.

A strict guard had been placed over him since then, and now he was occupying his time making mud-pies and trying in vain to make them fizz also. It was a pitiable sight; but we had other things to think of, and soon all the men save Jerry and his guard were at their posts; ammunition was served out, and a large supply of water brought in from the spring close by the kraal. Then we waited for the enemy.

We had not long to wait; but it seemed hours and hours before any sign of them appeared; then all of a sudden the crest of a low hill to the north of us was black—black with armed Zulus. Three hundred of them! there must have been nearer three thousand, a long line, which, pausing a moment, began slowly to creep down the yellowish-gray hillside like a great black and white snake. They were a couple of miles away; but we could see them clearly through the glasses, and to the unaided eye the glint of the morning sun on their assegai blades looked like burnished silver. I looked around me. The men were at the loop-holes which had been cut in the outer stockade. With grim and set faces they were watching the advancing foe, and for the most part were quiet and silent.

We officers were gathered on the rising ground in the middle of the kraal, for there was no need of concealment; and by one of the huts was the huge form of Gentleman Jerry working away at his little heap of mud, and over all floated the old flag, its folds streaming out against the gentle breeze.

Away out on the plain the impi had halted, and with our glasses we could see the headmen consulting together. Then on it came again without cry or sound, and again halted out of range. We waited anxiously for its further movements, and then, to our surprise—for the Zulus usually attack in great force—a small party moved to the front, while the rest squatted down and prepared to watch the assault. It was evident they deemed our numbers small, but they could have had no idea we had the field-pieces, or they would have attacked us with a far larger force than the three hundred unringed warriors who stood in a double line being inspected by their chiefs. We learned afterwards that the three hundred young warriors, constituting the party Knobby had come across, had begged as an especial favour to be allowed the privilege of eating up the white men. Whether they altogether enjoyed the eating-up process we must leave the reader himself to judge. Fortunately they could only attack us by the face of the slope, owing to the nature of the ground, and our whole available force was grouped together at this part of the kraal to await the Zulu charge. Next moment the line was in motion, and up the slope they came, slowly, but steadily, their great war-shields in front of them, and we could see that some of them carried rifles. Then they burst into a wild war-song, the burden of which came rolling up the hill towards us. 'Slay, slay,' they chanted; 'the sun is red; we shall eat them up; the white men shall die; onward, children of the Amazulu; kill, kill!' But the kraal was silent. And now they quickened their pace, and swept upwards, their plumes waving, and their fierce faces grinning at us above their shield-points; but the kraal was no longer silent, for suddenly the field-pieces opened fire upon them with deadly effect.

Taken altogether by surprise, they halted a moment, and seemed to waver, then, encouraged by their leaders, they poured in a scattered volley, and throwing away their muskets, drew together for a final charge; but quick and sharp came the command, and a blaze of fire sprang from the stockade, as the Martinis poured in a deadly hail upon their ranks. The battle-fever was upon them, however, and undeterred, up they came, eager to grapple with the hidden foe; but it was not to be. Fierce and terrible as they were, more fierce and terrible was the rain of shot which met them, and down they went, dozens at a time, writhing and bleeding, biting at the long grass and clutching it in their death-agonies. Still, so wild and furious was their charge, that they were not twenty yards from the kraal when what was left of them turned to flee; but, as they fled, a great mocking cry rose from the plain, so that some turned back, and met a warrior's death on the blood-stained slope.

'Cease firing!' We could not afford to waste a shot upon the fugitives, and yet we had repulsed the first attack with but one man killed and four slightly wounded, two of them by assegais. But down in the plain they had gathered again for the fight, and the roll of the war-chant from two thousand savage throats rose upon the morning air. On they came, pouring in two volleys, and rushing to the charge, heedless of the bullets which tore through them. How could we hope to stem such a living torrent? In front ran a tall warrior, waving a heavy knobkerrie above his head and cheering on his followers. He seemed to bear a charmed life, for not a bullet reached him.

'A guinea to the man who pots the big nigger,' shouted Jones. Poor lad, they were his last words, for an assegai caught him full in the throat; but, as he fell, a heavy revolver bullet bowled over the 'big nigger,' and he was trampled under foot by his followers as they bounded onwards.

'Back, back!' came the cry; and the red-coats retreated quickly behind the second row of stakes, followed by a flight of spears. As I ran with the rest, I felt a sudden hot pain dart through my leg, and next moment was lying between the palisades, pinned through the calf by an assegai. There I lay with some others who had fallen, waiting for death, for the death that was coming swiftly up the slope. I was strangely cool, save for the pain in my leg, which made me wince whenever I tried to turn, and all the while the bullets sang above my head as they went sweeping down the hill through and over the outer palisades. Suddenly I saw the outer barrier shake and splinter some twenty yards away, and next moment it was down, and a great Zulu rushed through the opening in it, and paying no heed to me, ran straight at the inner row of stakes. With a bound he was upon them; but as he hung there, I heard a strange low laugh come from the kraal, and then, above his black head, the butt of a rifle came into view. Next moment, it descended; and the warrior, his head split like a pumpkin, fell backwards, just as three other Zulus came rushing through the gap. But a roar which rose high above the din of battle came from the kraal, and right through the inner barrier Gentleman Jerry burst his way, a clubbed rifle clenched in his great hands. He made straight for the three Zulus, and first one and then another went down with their skulls battered out of all shape, while the third, a little squat man, drew back in terror. The madman was bleeding now from a couple of assegai wounds; but I saw his eyes gleam with fury as the terrified warrior was jerked aside as if he had been a child, and in his place there stood a gigantic Zulu whirling a heavy knobkerrie in the air. It needed not his plumed head and magnificent leopard-skin kaross to proclaim him a chief; it was evident from his lofty bearing and every movement of his lithe but giant frame. A crowd of Zulus were now at the gap in the stockade; but they stood there in awe, gazing at their chief and the strange white warrior.

From the kraal came the hoarse order, 'Keep on firing, lads,' and the bullets still whistled and sang above me; but the fire had slackened, for the cartridges were all but spent.

Crash! Knobkerrie and rifle-butt had met, but away spun the former, while the Martini was jerked out of the madman's grasp. With a cry of triumph the chief sprang forward and plunged his stabbing assegai into Jeremy's right side. Next moment, the madman had plucked it out, and the next he had the Zulu in his terrible embrace. To and fro the tall figures rocked, and then, as I lay, I could see the chief's eyes start from their sockets and his face grow wild with fear and pain. Then there came a cracking, grinding sound, horrible to hear, and Gentleman Jerry tossed the Zulu's crushed and mangled corpse from him, and with a great effort stood erect, the blood pouring from his mouth; then, with a cry, he threw up his arms and fell beside his prostrate foe.

But even as he fell, and as friendly arms dragged me into the kraal, from the plain below a bugle call rang out, and a hearty British cheer, followed by a rattle of carbines, brought joy to us, and carried dismay to our baffled foes, who, as they fled, were cut down in dozens by the cavalry who had come so timeously to our rescue.

When all was over and the kraal was cleared, Gentleman Jerry was found lying quiet and still, a strange smile on his blood-stained face, from which the madness had gone for ever. So we buried him there with his comrades, by the old kraal on the grassy slope, and there he lies in that far-off land, and his secret lies buried with him.

Strangely enough, about a year afterwards I was looking over the 'agony' column of the *Times* when I came upon the following: 'J. T. (S——e). My poor boy, it has all been a sad mistake, and a vile plot; the letters were frauds. Come back, for God's sake, before it is too late.'

Jeremy, or not Jeremy? that is the question.

OREGON WOOD-RATS.

A Correspondent from Falls City, Oregon, writes: The Oregon wood-rat has a curious fondness for bright colours. It is larger than the common rat, with a long bushy tail; and it makes its nest at the top of fir-trees—a mass of sticks and moss. But as soon as any one builds a hut in the forest, the wood-rats come to inspect it, as they are very curious, and also very fond of appropriating any bright objects, and will carry away forks, spoons, &c. They often desert the trees and begin to build a nest under the roof of the hut, or in any undisturbed place. I once found a nest half-made in an old wash-tub, and lined with red flannel. When we arrived here thirteen years ago from England, it was nearly evening; the roads had been very rough from Corvallis, and we were quite tired out, and very glad to see the old hut on the claim we had bought. No one felt inclined to do much that night, so we spread mattresses on the floor and prepared to have a good night's rest. But no sooner was the light extinguished than there came a hurry-scurry of little feet, and bright eyes shone all round us, much to our alarm; but they all vanished as soon as the candle was lighted, some taking flight up the wide open chimney, others up some stairs into a loft.

The man who came with us said: 'Oh, those are wood-rats. They will carry to their nests any little articles you may leave about.'

The next day we obtained traps, and tried to catch them in the same manner as English rats with toasted cheese or a piece of bacon; but they took no notice of either of these delicacies. We noticed that several times, when I left a bright red crochet shawl I had lying on a chair at night, pieces were torn off it, and once it was dragged up the steps to the loft; so we threw it over a trap, and the next morning a large wood-rat measuring sixteen inches from head to tip of tail was caught; and that was the first of ten that were attracted by the same shawl, which never failed to catch one whenever the trap was covered with it.

We very rarely see one now. I suppose they have retired farther back into the forest, away from civilisation. In one of their nests here I saw a pocket-knife, a steel fork, a collar-stud, and pieces of a red flannel shirt. They live upon berries, nuts, and various roots, and seeds of the fir-cones; but do not care for maize, oats, wheat, or potatoes, &c., like squirrels and chipmunks.

IF THOU WERT FALSE.

If thou wert false to me, what could I do?—
If thou wert false to me, what could I say?
Could I look up and face the light of day—
Thou faithless and I true?

I could not dare to speak a word of blame,
But in my heart the grief would lie and ache;
Calmness without, my lips could never take
The music of thy name.

The pain would choke me if I tried to weep—
The stifled sorrow would lay waste within;
Tears might relieve, but tears I might not win—
Rest, but I could not sleep.

There could be neither tears, nor speech, nor rest,
Till I forgave as I would be forgiven;
Then might the bonds of frozen grief be riven,
And sobbings ease my breast.

If thou wert false to me while I was true,
I would remember rather than forget—
Loving thee still with that uncancelled debt
Of love for ever due.

Arthur L. Salmon.

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AN HISTORIC DUEL.

On the death this summer of the twelfth Duke of Hamilton, the title passed to a distant relative. The twelfth duke was fifth in descent from the fourth duke through his eldest son James: the thirteenth is also fifth in descent from the same fourth duke, but through his third son Anne (so called after his godmother Queen Anne). That fourth duke it was who, a hundred and eighty-three years ago, fought the famous fatal duel with Lord Mohun, in which both principals were killed. In *Esmond,* Thackeray gives the story with all the heightening of romance, for, as every reader will remember, the duke's death occurs on the eve of his marriage to Beatrix Castlewood, and the fatal news is brought to his bride by Henry Esmond as she is choosing her wedding gifts. Esmond had been dining with his old commander, General Webb, and the feast, we are told, had been arranged in honour of the Duke of Hamilton before his departure as ambassador to the Court of Louis XIV. At the last moment, however, he had sent an apology, pleading most urgent business. The business was with Lord Mohun in Hyde Park.

Without the chief guest, the evening passed somewhat gloomily, and several of the company had left, when suddenly carriage-wheels were heard to stop on the street outside, and 'Mr Swift entered with a perturbed face. St John, excited with drink, was making some wild quotation out of *Macbeth,* but Swift stopped him. "Drink no more, my lord, for God's sake," says he. "I come with the most dreadful news. Duke Hamilton is dead: he was murdered an hour ago by Mohun and Macartney. They had a quarrel this morning; they gave him not so much time as to write a letter. He went for a couple of his friends, and he is dead; and Mohun, too, the bloody villain who was set on him. They fought in Hyde Park just before sunset; the duke killed Mohun, and Macartney came up and stabbed him, and the dog is fled. I have your chariot below. Send to every part of the country and apprehend that villain. Come to the duke's house and see if any life be left in him."

"Oh Beatrix, Beatrix!" thought Esmond, "and here ends my poor girl's ambition."'

But fascinating as are Thackeray's brilliant pages, it may be well to turn to a more authentic version of the tragedy.

In the *Historical and Genealogical Memoirs of the House of Hamilton* by Mr Anderson, printed at Edinburgh in the year 1825, a long chapter is devoted to this James, fourth Duke of Hamilton. He was the eldest son of Anne, Duchess in her own right; and after violently opposing the Union, had made his peace with the Queen, and been created Duke of Brandon in the peerage of the United Kingdom. Her majesty also decorated him with the Garter, in addition to the Order of the Thistle which he already possessed. When remonstrated with for bestowing such an unprecedented superfluity of honours, her majesty replied: 'Such a subject as the Duke of Hamilton has a pre-eminent claim to every mark of distinction which a crowned head can confer. I will henceforth wear both Orders myself.' So His Grace was at all events spared the inconvenience of singularity in his public appearances.

Alas! it was but for a very short time the duke was permitted to enjoy either titles or decorations. 'His Grace was a few days afterwards appointed ambassador extraordinary to France upon the conclusion of the Treaty of Utrecht; but, while splendid preparations were making for that embassy, the Duke of Hamilton fell in a duel with Charles, Lord Mohun, Baron of Oakhampton in Devonshire (who was also killed on the spot), in Hyde Park, on Saturday, 15th November 1712, in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and was buried with his ancestors at Hamilton.'

The two noblemen had married sisters, nieces of Lord Macclesfield, and fell out as to their property. 'High words' passed between them, then low bows, as was the fashion of the times, and an hour or two after, swords were flashing, fatally on this occasion for both. The *Memoirs* above quoted give a long and circumstantial account of the combat, and a ghastly butchery it must have been.

'The duke,' we read, 'next morning went in his chariot to Colonel Hamilton's lodgings at Charing Cross and hurried him away. The colonel having forgot his sword, His Grace stopped the carriage, gave the servant a bunch of keys, with orders to bring a mourning sword out of a particular closet, and then drove to Hyde Park, where they found Lord Mohun and General Macartney before them. The duke made some compliment, and threw off his cloak, when Lord Mohun, bowing to him, said: "I must ask your Grace one favour, which is, that these gentlemen may have nothing to do in our quarrel."

'To this the duke answering: "My lord, I leave them to themselves," all immediately drew and engaged. . . . Such was the animosity with which they fought, that, neglecting the rules of art, they seemed to run on one another as if they tried which should kill first.'

In a few minutes both the principals were mortally wounded. The seconds survived, although they had their own 'animosities' to fire their blood, for Colonel Hamilton had an old prejudice against the General for being made major in the Scottish Guards over his head; but the park-keepers interfered before they had seriously injured each other. On being examined before the Privy-council, Colonel Hamilton gave evidence that Macartney, having been disarmed by him, had given the final thrust which despatched the duke.

Whether this was the case or not, it raised a hue and cry against the general, who fled the country. The Scottish peers made the matter their own, and presented a petition to Queen Anne 'that she would be pleased to write to all kings and states in allegiance with her, not to shelter General Macartney, but to cause him to be apprehended and sent over to England.'

But things moved slowly in those days. Macartney was safe at Antwerp before it was really known that he had fled, and there he remained, spite of any communication with 'kings and states,' till 1716, when he came back to England, and (George I. having by this time succeeded) gave himself up to be tried by the Court of King's Bench. 'The jury, by direction of the court, acquitted him of the murder, but found a verdict of manslaughter, of which he was discharged by the formality of a cold iron [that is, he was nominally 'burnt in the hand' with a cold iron], immediately made use of to prevent appeal.'

A bundle of old papers put into our hands the other day, revived for us in a singular way the story recorded in the *Historical Memoirs* and elaborated in *Esmond*. The papers fell apart as we undid the tape which had bound them for many a year; and there, open to the curious eye of to-day, lay all their faded records, their forgotten secrets. Accounts, notes of receipts and disbursements long since settled, estimates for repairs, measurements of an estate which has been built over and municipalised for half a century—such were their contents. Those who wrote them, those to whom they were written, are gone long ago, and the interest of the papers was gone with them.

We had looked through the whole dusty packet, and were about to tie it up again, when we picked up one paper which had somehow escaped notice. It was a thin, yellow sheet, that might have lain in a pocket-book, and we unfolded it, hardly expecting it would contain anything of more moment than those we had already examined. But a glance told that here was something different. The writing was faded, and difficult to decipher at first sight, but the date at the end was distinct in old-fashioned figuring, 'thirteen day of february i7i4;' and below the date were signatures in large legible characters, with seals attached to them. Gradually we spelt out the lines, till the import of the document unravelled itself before us, and in spirit we passed across the centuries. We were away back in Esmond's world; a world of court ladies beautiful as Beatrix, of noble gentlemen balancing their chances as best they might between the Elector of Hanover and the Stuarts at St Germains; a world of plots and intrigue, whose honour was so false that no man dare trust his neighbour, and so delicate that for a word, for a gesture even—Hyde Park and drawn swords. For this worn yellow paper was an original document relating to the very duel in which the Duke of Hamilton was killed, as related by Thackeray. But let it tell its own story:

'We undersubscryvers Tutors to James Duke of Hamilton Being informed that Generall George Macartny who was accessery to the murder of the deceased James Duke of Hamilton our umquile father and for apprehending of whom there is a proclamation issued by her majestie and now by good providence issued in the Isle of Man And we being desirous to know the certainty of the said information, Doe hereby give power and commission to you Lieutennant James Hamilton and Ensign Alexander Cleland (?) to goe in company with sutch servants or other persons as you shall think fitt to imploy to the said Isle of man or to any other place where you are informed that the said Generall Macartny is sailed And there to take tryall if the person so called is the Generall Macartny. And if it be so found that you apply to the governour deputy governour of the Island Justices of peace and all other magistrats and officers and officers of the law to keep and reserve the said Generall Macartny in safe custody untill there be orders sent from the government for his transportation, and that you doe attend personally on him yourselfes and imploy what persons you think fitt for the effectual securing his person. Given under our hands Att Edenburgh and Hamilton the thirteen day of february i7i4.

Hamilton.
Ruglen. Tweeddale.
J. Hamilton. Panmure.'

'We undersubscryvers' by whom the document is signed and sealed, are the guardians of the young duke, a boy of ten at the time of his father's death. The first signature 'Hamilton' has a black seal attached to it, and may be that of the child's mother; or could it be of his grandmother, the Duchess Anne, who was still alive at this time, nearly eighty years of age? It bears the coat of arms on a lozenge, with the coronet and supporters, and the family motto 'Through.' The same shield and motto are on the seal against 'Ruglen,' which is the signature of the boy's uncle, Lord John Hamilton, fourth son of the old Duchess. 'Tweeddale' and 'Panmure' are uncles by marriage, having married his father's sisters; while the last signature to the paper is, according to the corresponding shield and motto, 'Tam virtute quam labore,' given in Anderson's *Memoirs*, that of Hamilton of Pencaitland, a member of the Society of Writers to the Signet, who 'was appointed one of the Senators of the College of Justice, by the title of Lord Pencaitland, in 1712.'

Whether 'Lieutennant James Hamilton' and the 'fitt persons' who were to accompany him, ever made their way to the 'said Isle of Man,' where 'by good providence' her majesty's proclamation was now issued, we do not know. He belonged to the Hamiltons of Dowan, and it is through the family of his only child that this worn and faded record of murder and vengeance has been preserved.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XIII.—A SUDDEN BLOW.

PAUL WYNYAN never remembered how he reached his chambers, but seemed to wake out of a stupor after it was dark, to find himself seated in the chair he had so often used when working out the great scheme in which Robert Dalton had said that he was to share.

He had been completely stunned by the terrible misfortune; but now, as he sat there in the darkness, his brain awakened into a state of wild activity, causing him acute mental suffering.

So good and earnest an old friend cut off in the midst of a great and useful life; taken from the arms of one who in every word showed her tender filial love! It was too hard, too cruel a stroke of Fate. For what had she done that she should be called upon to bear so dreadful a loss?

And once more the scene he imagined came back clearly pictured, of the silent room with the broken-hearted child weeping at the dead man's side.

Wynyan felt as if he could not bear it, and starting now from his seat, he paced his room hour after hour, till, in utter exhaustion, he sank back in his chair, gazing blankly before him at the window, feebly lit up by one of the street lamps outside.

Till then there had not been a single selfish thought to cross his mind; but now all at once came the doctor's words like a flash. He recalled all that had been said that evening when he dined in Harley Street. Then his reply to the doctor when they parted just now—an hour—many hours ago. When was it? He could not rest, but from out of the darkness which mentally hedged him in, there came now a numbed but agonising thought.

No: he had not spoken to Dalton—he had not seen him till he saw him lying back there stricken down—dying. And what would it mean? He was to have been his partner—the sharer in the wealth which the invention would produce, and he was to have gone to him—he had meant to go to him, to speak out boldly and in the simple, old Scriptural language say, 'I love her: give her me to wife.'

And now too late—too late!

For what did all this dumb oppressing agony mean, but the gradually increasing knowledge of his position. To-morrow he might have been partner in the great business—his employer's equal. To-morrow he would be only the employé of the firm. The great invention came of his inception, but what of that? He had nothing to show. He was the dead man's paid servant, and the invention had been worked out in his time, planned by means of his money, but that would give him no real claim upon it, as it seemed to him, even if he wished; and worst of all, as he recalled the doctor's words, most probably Dalton had left nothing definite in the way of will as to the future ordering of the business.

Wynyan's brain was too dull and confused for him to logically analyse the position; but as in the veriest tangle the thoughts flooded and blinded his mental faculties, it seemed to him that Rénée must succeed to her father's property, but with Brant there to assume, as a man and the next in kin, the governing power in the great business.

And himself? Could he tell Rénée of what was to have been? Brant would know and laugh it to scorn. If he made a claim—*if* he made a claim, and he felt that he could not—Brant would consult lawyers, and he saw himself being hounded down as an impostor, as one who, taking advantage of his knowledge of certain secrets, had vamped up a false story to rob his old employer's estate.

Brant! In full command there! Master of everything, for Rénée could not interfere. He foresaw what must take place. Brant would never tolerate his presence.

At last he made an angry gesture, throwing out his hands, as if to drive away the many fevered thoughts which would recur.

'Self—self—all miserable self!' he muttered; and he became conscious now that the light in the window was different, and going to it, he threw open the sash and stood there to feel the soft, cool air of the early dawn come gratefully to his aching brow.

He looked out upon the little Inn, and by that light everything looked different and strange, as the soft bluish light drove out the dark shadows. The two gas lamps he could see were sickly and pale, and the few stunted trees in the railed-in patch of garden where the old sun-dial stood were beginning to turn from dusky slate to green.

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'I won't think now,' he said to himself. 'Man proposes and God disposes. What can we do? May He soften her grief and lighten the burden. What is my pitiful life to hers?'

He drew back from the window, for he heard steps; then there was a rattling sound, and the light in one lamp was extinct. A minute later, following the quick steps, the next lamp was put out; the steps died away, and the little old Inn was silent.

Wynyan sat back in his chair once more, to go over all the incidents of the past few hours in spite of himself; and then he started up dazed and stupefied.

What did it mean? Why was he like that, standing by the table?

With a rush the great agony came back, and he knew that he must have been asleep for some hours. His watch showed him that—pointing to nine.

He was ready now to reproach himself. How could he sleep when yonder, in that darkened chamber, Rénée was watching and weeping still?

'Men must work and women must weep,' he muttered, as he went into his bed-chamber; and only an hour later, full of the stern determination to do his duty to the firm as rigidly as if Dalton would be there, he hurriedly swallowed a cup of tea at the first buffet, and then took a cab to Great George Street, to find every one in his place in the darkened rooms.

'Good—morning, Mr Wynyan,' said a feeble voice at his elbow, and he started at the change in old Hamber. Twenty-four hours had aged him terribly. 'God help us, sir! This is a terrible blow.'

Wynyan pressed the old man's hand, holding it for a few moments, and then walked to his own table and sat down, to try to crush out the misery which surrounded him by attacking work that he knew Dalton would have wished to be done.

The task was hard, but he struggled on hour after hour in the darkened room, where no one spoke higher than in a whisper when passing here and there on tiptoe.

Wynyan tried hard, but it was always the same. There straight before him was the baize door, and his eyes seemed to pierce it, so that he was constantly seeing the terribly appealing countenance of the old engineer with the eyes gazing wildly into his, as if asking him for help.

Then, in spite of himself, those eyes would seem as if they were appealing to him to carry out their scheme for Rénée's sake, and a fresh interpretation would come as well, the look bidding him take his child to love and protect now that he was passing away.

Drawing his breath hard, Wynyan bent over some papers he was trying to read, but the words and lines died away, dissolving as it were into the similitude of Dalton's chamber at home, with the firm, manly, old countenance fixed in death, and Rénée kneeling weeping by the side of the bed.

Always the same—he could not blind himself to those scenes, for his closed eyes only made them stand out the brighter before his mental vision.

'Poor old Dalton! Good, true, brave, old heart!' he muttered, 'for your sake and that of yours, I'll work here in spite of every rebuff, and do my duty free of all hope of the great reward.'

But he could not work that morning, as the gloomy hours glided by; still there was one thing which, from time to time, gave him satisfaction. It was when he looked round the large office and saw eyes fixed upon the door of the dead man's room, eyes that, in more than one case, told tales of genuine emotion; and as he bent over his work again, he could feel that the firm, decisive man had been respected, even loved, and that those present mourned for him, feeling that they had lost a friend who could hardly be replaced.

There was an exchange of wondering glances, and a faint whisper of surprise somewhere about three o'clock, for the outer door was opened, and Brant entered, looking neither to right nor left, but going straight to his own room, where, when the door closed upon him, keys were heard to rattle, and the occupant seemed to be busy.

Old Hamber sighed audibly, but no one spoke; and for some minutes nothing was heard but the scratching of pens or the picking up and laying down of a ruler upon table or desk.

Then Brant came out again, walked to old Hamber's table, and said in a low voice: 'Let my books and papers be moved to-morrow morning into the other room.'

The next minute he had opened the baize door, entered, and closed it behind him.

Very few words, but they were full of meaning. There was a decision about them -a tone of mastership, and the clerks glanced at each other, some exchanging a short nod, while old Hamber unlocked his table drawer, drew out the estimates which had been signed, turned over the leaves, looked long and fixedly at Brant's handwriting, and then, as if he were telling himself that it was correct after all, he took from the case a large blank linen-lined envelope, directed it in his firm clear hand, folded the documents, slipped them in, moistened the gummed flap, and fastened it down, proceeding afterwards to light a taper, seal the envelope, weigh it, and stamp it for post.

Wynyan found himself attentively watching the old man's actions, thinking the while of how much they meant, for he was near enough to see Brant's bold florid writing at the bottom of the papers, and he instinctively grasped what it all meant, knowing their contents, and that they had been waiting for Robert Dalton to sign.

'Mastership — the new principal standing where I should have stood, wielding the power that would have been mine; and now what of the future, what of Rénée, what of me?'

The thoughts had hardly crossed his active brain when the answer to a portion of them was preparing, for the little electric bell communicating with the inner room was rung, and the young clerk Gibbs rose and went in, to return instantly.

Wynyan was quite prepared to see him come to his table, and he looked up to see that old Hamber was expecting the same, for his eyes met the young engineer's with a look full of commiseration and pain.

'Mr Brant Dalton desires to speak to you, sir,' whispered the young clerk.

Wynyan rose firm, stern, and prepared for what he felt was inevitable, and, feeling that every eye was directed at him, he walked quietly to the baize door, opened it and entered, to find Brant standing with his back to the empty grate.

He was very pale, and his lips were compressed; there was a shifty look, too, in his eyes, but he had evidently strung himself up for the interview, and after a momentary evasion, he met the quiet stern look fixed upon him, and coughed slightly to get rid of a little huskiness.

Then there was a pause, broken by Wynyan.

'You wished to speak to me, sir?' he asked.

'Yes, and I suppose you know why—what about?'

It was on Wynyan's lips to fence with the question and say: 'I presume you wish to consult me about some of the office work,' but he mastered the desire, and said gravely: 'I believe I do.'

'Ah, that's right, for it will make matters more easy for us both,' said Brant. 'I see we understand one another. Of course, it is sudden, and it is a terribly painful time to have to talk about such matters, but in justice to myself and my new and great responsibilities, I feel bound to act.'

Wynyan stood gazing at him firmly, and Brant coughed and went on again.

'There is no time like the present, Mr Wynyan, and I like to be prompt over business matters. I intend to be so in my conduct of this great business.'

'May I ask, sir, if you have authority for all you are saying?'

'That is not your affair, sir, and I am not bound to offer you explanations. But, pray understand that I have not sent for you to quarrel. This is simple business which I, as successor to my late uncle, intend to carry out promptly.'

'As successor to your late uncle, sir,' said Wynyan gravely.

'That's it, sir. Now, then, Mr Wynyan, let's understand each other at once. Mr Dalton believed in you, sir.'

'Had not we better leave the discussion of this, Brant Dalton, till my poor old friend has been laid in his grave and the lawyers have read his will?'

'No, sir,' cried Brant fiercely; 'and, understand this: My uncle has left no will. I assume full control here, my cousin being perfectly unfit, and not of age. But, pish! I am not going to explain. Your poor old friend, sir, as you please to call him, with an unwarrantable assumption, believed in you, his hired servant: I do not, and we will part at once. For the sake of my uncle, and to keep up the well-known character of the firm, you will be paid your salary to the next quarter, and receive six months' pay in addition in lieu of notice. I could say a great deal more, but this is not the time, though it is the place.'

He turned and rang, and then, seeing that Wynyan was moving towards the door, he cried: 'Stop! You will wait, if you please.'

The young clerk entered.

'Gibbs, ask Mr Hamber to be good enough to step here.'

The clerk left the room, and Brant cleared his throat again, and took a turn up and down the room, trying to assume a look of power, but failing dismally, for the hands which played nervously with his watch-chain shook visibly as old Hamber entered.

'Ah, Hamber, Mr Wynyan severs his connection with the firm at once.'

'Mr Wynyan, sir!—goes?' cried the old clerk in a tone of remonstrance.

'You heard what I said, sir; please attend.'

'But Mr Brant, sir, what are we to do, sir? Now your poor, dear uncle is gone we—cannot'——

'Silence, sir!' thundered Brant. 'Are you master here, or am I?'

The old man made a deprecating gesture.

'You will refer to the books and calculate what would be due exactly to Mr Wynyan up to the end of his next quarter.'

'Yes, sir,' sighed the old man.

'Add to it six months' full payment in lieu of notice; fill up a cheque, and bring it to me to sign.'

'Yes, sir.'

'Then write a letter, which I will also sign, and forward it by special messenger to the bank, telling them that in future all cheques will be signed by me.'

'Yes, sir.'

'That will do.—Let this be attended to at once.'

The old clerk moved toward the door, and Brant took another turn up and down.

'Mr Wynyan, you can wait in the office, and write out your receipt; the cheque will be brought to you by Mr Hamber.—That will do.'

A dark flush came over Wynyan's face, and his lips parted to speak angrily, but he refrained, and seeing that Brant had turned his back as he stood now just where his uncle had lain dying but a few hours before, he passed out of the room, followed by old Hamber.

'Oh, Mr Wynyan, my dear sir—this is terrible indeed!'

'Thank you, my good old friend. We shall meet again often, I hope, so I will not say good-bye.—Don't speak to me, please,' as, to a man, those in the room rose to their feet, and a low angry murmur arose as they grasped the truth. 'Thank you all very much for all the past. I cannot speak to you now.'

He caught up his hat and moved towards the door, unconscious of the fact that Brant's ear was against the baize.

'But, Mr Wynyan, my dear sir,' cried old Hamber; 'the cheque—pray, wait for the cheque.'

'What!' cried Wynyan, turning upon him furiously—'take that? Bah!'

The door closed like an echo of his ejaculation, and they heard his hurried step upon the stairs, while old Hamber looked round helplessly.

'The business,' he said with his voice sounding tremulous and strange, 'the business: it means ruin.'

(*To be continued.*)

CHAUTAUQUA.

A VERY influential social and educational movement has taken root and grown up in the United States during the past twenty years associated with Chautauqua, after the lake of that name, where the meetings are chiefly held, in the south-west of the State of New York. On its educational side it has been defined as 'a school for people out of school, who can no longer attend school, a college for every one's home, and leads to the dedication of everyday life to educational purposes.' Mr H. H. Boyesen, who went in a sceptical mood to lecture there, says that never in all his experience had he a more intelligent and sympathetic audience, and that the work done during the six short weeks of meetings is by no means of a flimsy or superficial character. On its social side, to him it was the nearest realisation to democracy of anything which he had witnessed in the States, because of its bringing 'rich and poor, learned and unlearned, into neighbourhood and comradeship, helpful and honourable to both.'

It may not quite realise the idea of a world university, but it has 100,000 registered students, half of whom are between thirty and forty years of age; while it has members in every State and Territory, 'its circles have rolled from Chautauqua Lake to Canada, Mexico, Central America, Chili, Great Britain, France, Russia, Bulgaria, Syria, Cape Colony, Persia, India, Australia, China, Japan, the isles of the sea, Hawaii, Alaska.' This educational movement is promoted by three distinct agencies—namely, voluntary home-reading during the year, with reports of progress to headquarters; study and training by means of correspondence; and the great summer meetings at Chautauqua Lake. This movement had its origin in a kind of camp-meeting, or Sunday-school Assembly, held at Fair Point, on Lake Chautauqua, in August 1874. The idea of utilising a camp-meeting for educational purposes was first proposed by Mr Silas Farmer in 1870, but it was Mr Lewis Miller, of Akron, Ohio, of buck-eye mower fame, and Dr (now Bishop) John H. Vincent who inaugurated and launched the movement at the Chautauqua Sunday-school Assembly of 1874. One of its first objects was to call in the aid of science and literature to the support of Christianity, with a view of educating and better preparing teachers for their work in connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church. A two weeks' session of lectures, normal lessons, sermons, devotional meetings, conferences, and illustrative exercises was begun, with such added recreative features as concerts, fireworks, and one or two humorous lectures. Then science and literature in relation to life and thought began to be grafted into the other studies, which included map-drawing, black-board sketching, the study of Biblical geography in a great relief map of Palestine made of turf and stones, and open-air talks. The wide interest taken in the meetings from the outset is apparent from the fact that by the 600 students in the first year twenty-five States were represented, while Canada also sent a contingent.

The summer assembly at Chautauqua is held for six weeks during July and August, on the north shore of the lake, on a well-wooded, naturally terraced piece of land. The lake lies 700 feet above Lake Erie, from which it is distant about eight miles. The Assembly grounds comprise 165 acres, contain over 500 attractive summer cottages, a fine hotel, a museum of archæology, an amphitheatre (unenclosed on three sides, with a seating capacity for over 5000 people), and halls for meetings. There is also a model of Palestine 300 feet long, and a miniature representation of modern Jerusalem. This summer assembly now includes the following distinct departments: The Sunday-school normal department, schools of language, Teachers' Retreat, literary and scientific circles, College of Liberal Arts, school of theology, and extension and summer assemblies. The exercises —which change every season—in the first class include special American subjects, such as constitutional history, early voyages and conquests, writers, scenery, or the history of the American navy. Then come miscellaneous courses, ranging from Italian literature to questions of the hour. Single lectures and addresses are given by popular and interesting speakers, while dramatic readings, music, and recreation, in the way of illuminations and athletics, are not neglected. The College of Liberal Arts is arranged in departments including English, German, French, Latin, Greek, physics and chemistry, mathematics, geology, botany, history, and political economy. Under English language and literature, there may be Old English, talks on style, the study of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Browning, and the American poets. The Schools of Sacred Literature embrace the study of the Bible, the school of Hebrew, and Greek, and Semitic languages. The Teachers' Retreat gives model lessons in teaching, while the gymnasium and school of music each have their votaries.

The plan of a literary and scientific circle, begun in 1878, has been widely successful, and suggested our own National Home-reading Union. In the States it seems to have grown and spread with great rapidity, there being now 2000 circles, with a membership little short of 100,000. Upwards of 180,000 members have been enrolled since the commencement. The reading circle embraces a four years' course, with selections in English from the ancient classics, history, literature, science, and art. Each year of the four is specially devoted to a great nation, and is named 'the Greek year,' 'the Roman year,' 'the English year,' or 'the American year,' as the case may be. Though languages and mathematics are not taught, an attempt is made to give the 'college outlook.' Certain text-books are prepared, or prescribed, while the monthly magazine, the *Chautauquan*, with a circulation of 60,000, contains useful and informatory articles, with aids to members in the shape of notes, outlines of readings, and word studies. Although certificates are granted at the end of the four years' course, it is expected that members will have been so interested and stimulated as to follow up some favourite line of study.

Dr J. G. Fitch, formerly of the Education Office, and author of the article Education in Chambers's *Encyclopædia*, after a visit to Chautauqua, summed up some of its benefits thus: 'It has been the means of illuminating hundreds of homes; it has brought better books on the shelves, better pictures to the walls, and better talk to the fireside.' Many a young man has been stimulated by it to gain the further culture of the college. A house-servant became a bright scholar, entered the State normal school, and graduated. One man wrote to the secretary: 'I am so grateful to you that I can't express what I feel. I am a hard-working man. I have six children, and I work hard to keep them at school. Since I found out about your circle I am trying my best to keep up, so that my boys will see what father does, just for an example to them.' A night-watchman reported that he read as he came on his night-rounds to the lights. A steam-boat pilot acknowledged that when on deck on stormy nights he had now something to think of. A merchant's clerk and his wife were so much in earnest as to give the morning hours between five and seven o'clock to the lessons. An army officer's wife, three hundred miles from the nearest book-store, fairly wept with delight when her text-books at last arrived, and she realised that she was not entirely cut off from communion with kindred minds and opportunities for culture.

The College of Liberal Arts is intended to assist those who are unable to leave business in order to attend college, or those who wish to make up for early deficiencies. It is conducted on the correspondence principle. Chautauqua has now sixty summer assemblies, which have sprung directly from the parent stem.

The Martha's Vineyard Summer Institute, begun in 1878, four years later than Chautauqua, was originated by Colonel H. B. Sprague, headmaster of a girl's high school in Boston. It proved so successful that a substantial edifice was built in which to carry on the work, which embraces the natural sciences, ancient and modern languages, mathematics, English literature, history, civil government, music, painting, and sloyd. A system of summer schools is also held in connection with Harvard University, that of Virginia, and some other American colleges.

Our own National Home-reading Union, started in this country in 1888 as the National Home-Reading Circles Union, endeavours to cover only part of the ground occupied by Chautauqua in the United States, where a great deal more interest and enthusiasm has been awakened for such methods of teaching than with us. By its agency, however, courses of reading have been drawn up, suited to the tastes and requirements of different classes, especially of young people, artisans, and general readers. A wholesome attempt has been made by the Union to interest Englishmen in the history and literature and physical geography and natural history of their own country. Summer assemblies were held at Buxton and Salisbury last year: this year the Union 'period' comprises the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, and Leamington was the place of summer assembly during the first week of July. In addition to an attractive lecture programme, excursions were made to Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick, Kenilworth, and other interesting places. The office of this Union is Surrey House, Victoria Embankment, London.

THE CAPTAIN MORATTI'S LAST AFFAIR.

CHAPTER IV. CONCLUSION—THE TORRE DOLOROSA.

Days were yet to pass before Guido Moratti was able to leave his chamber; but at last the leech who attended him said he might do so with safety; and later on, the steward of the household brought a courteous invitation from the Count of Pieve to dine with him. As already explained, Moratti had not as yet seen his host; and since he was well enough to sit up, there were no more dreamy visions of the personal presence of Felicità. He had made many resolutions whilst left to himself, and had determined that as soon as he was able to move, he would leave the castle, quit Italy, and make a new name for himself, or die in the German wars. He was old enough to build no great hopes on the future; but fortune might smile on him, and then—many things might happen. At any rate, he would wipe the slate clean, and there should be no more ugly scores on it.

Not that he was a reformed man; he was only groping his way back to light. Men do not cast off the past as a snake sheds his skin. He knew that well enough, but he knew, too, that he had seen a faint track back to honour; and difficult as it was, he had formed a determination to travel by it. He had been so vile, he had sunk so low, that there were moments when a despair came on him; but with a new country and new scenes, and the little flame of hope that was warming his dead soul back to life, there might yet be a chance. He knew perfectly that he was in love, and when a man of his age loves, it is for the remainder of his life. He was aware—none better—that his love was madness, all but an insult, and that it was worse than presumption to even entertain the thought that he had inspired any other feeling beyond that of pity in the heart of Felicità. It is enough to say that he did not dare to hope in this way; but he meant to so order his future life as to feel that any such sentiment as love in his heart towards her would not be sacrilege.

He sent back a civil answer to the invitation; and a little after eleven, descended the stairway which led from his chamber to the Count's apartments, looking very pale and worn, but very handsome. For he was, in truth, a man whose personal appearance took all eyes. The apartments of the Count were immediately below Moratti's own chamber, and on entering, he saw the old knight himself reclining in a large chair. He was alone, except for a hound which lay stretched out on the hearth, his muzzle between his fore-paws, and a dining-table set for three was close to his elbow. Bernabo of Pieve received his guest with a stately courtesy, asking pardon for being unable to rise, as he was crippled. 'They clipped my wings at Arx Sismundea, captain—before your time; but of a truth I am a glad man to see you strong again. It was a narrow affair.'

'I cannot thank you in words, Count; you and your house have placed a debt on me I can never repay.'

'Tush, man! There must be no talk of thanks. If there are to be any, they are due to the leech, and to Felicità, my daughter. She is all I have left, for my son was killed at Santa Croce.'

'I was there, Count.'

'And knew him?'

'Alas, no. I was on the side of Spain.'

'With the besieged, and he with the League. He was killed on the breach—poor lad.'

At this moment a curtain at the side of the room was lifted, and Felicità entered. She greeted Moratti warmly, and with a faint flush on her cheeks, inquired after his health, hoping he was quite strong again.

'So well, Madonna, that I must hurry on my journey to-morrow.'

'To-morrow!' Her large eyes opened wide in astonishment, and there was a pain in her look. 'Why,' she continued, 'it will be a fortnight ere you can sit in the saddle again.'

'It might have been never, but for you,' he answered gravely, and her eyes met his, and fell. At this moment the steward announced that the table was ready; and by the time the repast was ended, Moratti had forgotten his good resolutions for instant departure, and had promised to stay for at least a week, at the urgent intercession of both the Count and his daughter. He knew he was wrong in doing so, and that, whatever happened, it was his duty to go at once; but he hesitated with himself. He would give himself one week of happiness, for it was happiness to be near her, and then—he would go away for ever. And she would never know, in her innocence and purity, that Guido Moratti, bravo—he shuddered at the infamous word—loved her better than all the world beside, and that for her sake he had become a new man.

After dinner, the Count slept, and the day being bright, they stepped out into a large balcony and gazed at the view. The balcony, which stretched out from a low window of the dining chamber, terminated on the edge of a precipice which dropped down a clear two hundred feet; and leaning over the moss-grown battlements, they looked at the white winter landscape before them. Behind, rose the tower they had just quitted, and Felicità, turning, pointed to it, saying: 'We call this the Torre Dolorosa.'

'A sad name, Madonna. May I ask why?'

'Because all of our house who die in their beds die here.'

'And yet you occupy this part of the castle.'

'Oh, I do not. My chamber is there—in Count Ligo's Tower;' and she pointed to the right, where another gray tower rose from the keep. 'But my father likes to occupy the Torre Dolorosa himself. He says he is living with his ancestors—to whom he will soon go, as he always adds.'

'May the day be far distant.'

And she answered 'Amen.'

After this, they went in, and the talk turned on other matters.

At last the day came for Moratti's departure. He had procured another horse. It was indeed a gift which the old Count pressed upon him, and he had accepted it with much reluctance, but much gratitude. In truth, the kindness of these people towards him was unceasing, and Moratti made great strides towards his new self in that week. He was to have started after the mid-day dinner; but with the afternoon he was not gone, and sunset found him on the balcony of the Torre Dolorosa with Felicità by his side.

'You cannot possibly go to-night,' she said.

'I will go to-morrow, then,' replied Moratti, and she looked away from him.

It was a moment of temptation. Almost did a rush of words come to the captain's lips. He felt as if he must take her in his arms and tell her that he loved her as man never loved woman. It was an effort; but he was getting stronger in will daily, and he crushed down the feeling.

'It is getting chill for you,' he said; 'we had better go in.'

'Tell me,' she answered, not heeding his remark, 'tell me exactly where you are going?'

'I do not know—perhaps to join Piccolomini in Bohemia—perhaps to join Alva in the Low Countries—wherever a soldier's sword has work to do.'

'And you will come back?'

'Perhaps.'

'A great man, with a *condotta* of a thousand lances—and forget Pieve.'

'As God is my witness—never.—But it is chill, Madonna—come in.'

When they came in, Bernabo of Pieve was not alone, for standing close to the old man, his back to the fire, and rubbing his hands softly together, was the tall, gaunt figure of the Cavaliere Michele di Lippo.

'A sudden visit, dear cousin,' he said, greeting Felicità, and turning his steel-gray eyes, with a look of cold inquiry in them, on Moratti.

'The Captain Guido Moratti—my cousin, the Cavaliere di Lippo.'

'Of Castel Lippo, on the Greve,' put in Di Lippo. 'I am charmed to make the acquaintance of the Captain Moratti. Do you stay long in Pieve, captain?'

'I leave to-morrow.' Moratti spoke shortly. His blood was boiling, as he looked on the gloomy figure of the cavaliere, who watched him furtively from under his eyelids, the shadow of a sneer on his face. He was almost sick with shame when he thought how he was in Di Lippo's hands, how a word from him could brand him with ignominy beyond repair. Some courage, however, came back to him with the thought that, after all, he held cards as well, as, for his own sake, Di Lippo would probably remain quiet.

'So soon!' said Di Lippo with a curious

stress on the word soon, and then added, 'That is bad news.'

'I have far to go, signore,' replied Moratti coldly, and the conversation then changed. It was late when they retired; and as the captain bent over Felicità's hand, he held it for a moment in his own broad palm, and said: 'It is good-bye, lady, for I go before the dawn to-morrow.'

She made no answer; but, with a sudden movement, detached a bunch of winter violets she wore at her neck, and thrusting them in Moratti's hand, turned and fled. The Count was half asleep, and did not notice the passage; but Di Lippo said with his icy sneer: 'Excellent—you work like an artist, Moratti.'

'I do not understand you;' and turning on his heel, the captain strode off to his room.

An hour or so later, he was seated in a low chair, thinking. His valise lay packed, and all was ready for his early start. He still held the violets in his hand, but his face was dark with boding thoughts. He dreaded going and leaving Felicità to the designs of Di Lippo. There would be other means found by Di Lippo to carry out his design; and with a groan, the captain rose and began to pace the room. He was on the cross with anxiety. If he went without giving warning of Di Lippo's plans, he would still be a sharer in the murder—and the murder of Felicità—for a hair of whose head he was prepared to risk his soul. If, on the other hand, he spoke, he would be lost for ever in her eyes. Although it was winter, the room seemed to choke him, and he suddenly flung open the door and, descending the dim stairway, went out into the balcony. It was bright with moonlight, and the night was clear as crystal. He leaned over the battlements and racked his mind as to his course of action. At last he resolved. He would take the risk, and speak out, warn Bernabo of Pieve at all hazards, and would do so at once. He turned hastily, and then stopped, for before him in the moonlight stood the Cavaliere Michele di Lippo.

'I sought you in your chamber, captain,' he said in his biting voice, 'and not finding you, came here'——

'And how did you know I would be here?'

'Lovers like the moonlight, and you can see the light from her window in Ligo's Tower,' said Di Lippo, and added sharply: 'So you are playing false, Moratti.'

The captain made no answer; there was a singing in his ears, and a sudden and terrible thought was working. His hand was on the hilt of his dagger, a spring, a blow, and Di Lippo would be gone. And no one would know. But the cavaliere went on, unheeding his silence.

'You are playing false, Moratti. You are playing for your own hand with my hundred crowns. You think your ship has come home. Fool! Did you imagine I would allow this? But I still give you a chance. Either do my business to-night—the way is open—or to-morrow you are laid by the heels as a thief and a bravo. What will your Felicità'——

'Dog—speak her name again, and you die!' Moratti struck him across the face with his open palm, and Michele di Lippo reeled back a pace, his face as white as snow. It was only a pace, however, for he recovered himself at once, and sprung at Moratti like a wild-cat. The two closed. They spoke no word, and nothing could be heard but their laboured breath as they gripped together. Their daggers were in their hands; but each man knew this, and had grasped the wrist of the other. Moratti was more powerful; but his illness had weakened him, and the long lean figure of Michele di Lippo was as strong as a wire rope. Under the quiet moon and the winter stars, they fought, until at last Di Lippo was driven to the edge of the parapet, and in the moonlight he saw the meaning in Moratti's set face. With a superhuman effort, he wrenched his hand free, and the next moment his dagger had sunk to the hilt in the captain's side, and Moratti's grasp loosened, but only for an instant. He was mortally wounded, he knew. He was going to die; but it would not be alone. He pressed Di Lippo to his breast. He lifted him from his feet, and forced him through an embrasure which yawned behind. Here, on its brink, the two figures swayed for an instant, and then the balcony was empty, and from the deep of the precipice two hundred feet below, there travelled upwards the sullen echo of a dull crash, and all was quiet again.

. . . . . .

When the stars were paling, the long howl of a wolf rang out into the stillness. It reached Felicità in Count Ligo's Tower, and filled her with a nameless terror. 'Guard him, dear saints,' she prayed; 'shield him from peril, and hold him safe.'

UPSALA.

By Charles Edwardes.

Travelling by train in Sweden is usually so slow that the Briton in that land soon comes to look upon a journey of twenty or thirty miles as quite an enterprise. Four hours is not an extravagant amount of time for the Swedish goods-train—which takes passengers—to spend in covering forty-five miles. To an impetuous Anglo-Saxon this is terrible. If he be not of a turn of mind to take an interest in birch-trees, lakes, pines, and infrequent heavy-browed farmhouses, he will get very little picturesque compensation for the weariness of the journey. Save in the far north, and in the parts conterminous with Norway, Sweden is not a grand country. But its fiords and pine woods, if lacking in grandeur, have a softened beauty of their own.

For the visitor to Upsala, however, there is special comfort provided in an admirable fast train every morning from Stockholm. The distance is about forty miles, and it is covered in little more than an hour. The company by this train is likely in winter to seem of a highly grandiose order. It may be assumed that a number of Professors are of the party. The Swedish Professor is not at all exclusively a Dryasdust person. He is probably a stalwart, athletic fellow, with a strong face. Attire him in an outer coat of seal or bear skin, and he is at once a striking personality. Nowhere in Europe are the people so tall and well made as in Stockholm. The exigencies of the winter in the matter of raiment add to the imposing appearance of the Swede as a traveller. But whether these be Professors of learning or noblemen of sixteen quarterings, all who take the morning express to Upsala occupy themselves with their newspapers *en route* as rigorously as London stockbrokers on the Metropolitan Railway. The train is comfortable, of the corridor description; excellently warmed, of course, so that most persons slip out of their furs as soon as they enter it; and the white-haired guard—also in furs—goes to and fro among his charges with a courtesy that seems academic as well as thoroughly Swedish.

Stockholm's tall houses soon disappear, and we break headlong into the forest-land which is Sweden's chief landscape characteristic. The sky is blue and bright as the air is cold. Under these conditions, and with half a fathom of snow everywhere, King Oscar's country is an invigorating spectacle. The dark pines go well with the snow, and none the worse if they are hung with long lustrous icicles. The thick-walled pink and pale green or yellow farmsteads are also worth seeing. There is nothing flimsy here. The art of the jerry-builder could not thrive in Sweden. Even in Stockholm, new houses are not necessarily weak-backed houses: they are of good substantial granite blocks on well-laid foundations. The sun shines on innumerable tranquil pictures of rural life, as we thus glide smoothly on towards Sweden's chief university city. Sensational sights are not to be had. Both nature and the people hereabouts are methodical. From one expanse of dark snow-lit wood we pass to another, and the clearings between them hold the same kind of habitations and frozen lakes in their hollows. Roads are all expunged by the winter's snow. Only here and there we chance to see a well-furred man in a sledge—perhaps with a string of other sledges after him—slowly picking his way towards a house. He makes an effective blot upon the white carpet, though probably he knows it not.

But at length we run from the forest into the open, and the various villas, the great pink castle on a hill, and the tall-spired cathedral with its ruddy bricks, all proclaim our contiguity to Upsala. We are about to enter the city of 'lofty halls.' Our companions hurry into their robes and fold their newspapers. We remind ourselves that the city existed as an archiepiscopal see more than six centuries ago, and as a port to Old Upsala long before that. Such a place may be expected to excite immediate interest.

But, to tell the truth, Upsala scarcely gives the requisite impression of age. One approaches prepared to venerate it, and finds that it is a rather gay (for Sweden) little country town, with motley four-storeyed villas about the pleasant open space of its railway station. If it were summer instead of winter, there would be a band in the garden here, and perhaps booths for tea or iced drinks. Its long straight streets have a fair amount of life in them. It is difficult at first to regard the place as a prime centre of erudition. Its two thousand or so students might be young men engaged in ordinary vocations—at least seen as the stranger sees them in winter, in the thoroughfares and cafés. In summer their white caps distinguish them. To be sure the number of them who wear spectacles and look needlessly contemplative is remarkable. These features differentiate them from the mechanic, the clerk, or the commercial man. But the standard of manners in Sweden is so high that one can scarcely in this respect discriminate between the noble-born young gentleman here finishing his education and the youthful shop-assistant, whose aspirations and abilities are largely nurtured on books like Dr Smiles's *Self-help.*

By-and-by, however, when we have patrolled its streets and come to comprehend its various academic buildings and institutions; when we have looked upon the Codex Argenteus in its library—shown by a long-nosed old custodian well up in his duties—upon the various tombs in its cathedral, at the rather surprising collection of books in the booksellers' shops—including the immortal Schopenhauer and Mr Jerome K. Jerome's works in Swedish; when we have dined at a favourite student resort, and afterwards been touched by the genial manner in which seven Professors hob-a-nobbed together at a side table over punch and cigars—with music in an adjacent concert hall; and especially when we have marked the demeanour of the Upsala young ladies—a demeanour which plainly indicates a consciousness of their local power: then we begin to realise that Upsala is a university city with a certain crust upon it, like other university cities. This is a very long sentence, but it might readily have been made even longer in support of our argument.

Of course it is one thing to see Upsala in summer and quite another to visit it in winter. In December or January, thanks to its unevenness and the snow, it is fatiguing rather than diverting. The University is on one little hill, the famous Library is on another, the ugly old Castle is on a third, and the Cathedral is on a fourth; and each eminence has to be reached through a slough of snow, which, if new fallen, may well be almost impassable.

Our respectable ambassador, Whitelocke, in the days of the Commonwealth was condemned to spend several months here between November and May, waiting Queen Christina's leisure to sign a treaty with Great Britain. He was inexpressibly bored by the place. It is not wonderful. For a middle-aged man of a plethoric turn, the numerous ascents to the Castle that he made must have been more than tiresome. Perhaps it was some recompense to enjoy the sprightly conversation of the eccentric young queen. Whitelocke, however, thought her more than sufficiently frivolous, and did not forbear to hint this. But it is easy, even after only five or six hours' experience of Upsala on a January day, to sympathise with our ambassador's plaintive yearnings for the time when he might turn his back upon the flesh-coloured Castle with its black bulb-shaped towers, and hasten away to his English home.

In summer, Upsala must be much more attractive. Few cities of its size have such gardens. Their berried trees provide hearty meals for the birds when the winter is nearly half through its course. The triple avenue of its Churchyard Street would be admirable anywhere. One can conceive few more delightful promenades on a summer evening. Nor need the graves in the adjacent cemetery be regarded as aught of a drawback to the locality. They include a variety of interesting professorial tombstones, as well as the more suggestive monuments over the students of the different 'nations' of the University who for the last fifty or sixty years have died during their student term. Magpies flit among the trees, or perch gaily on the wooden sheathing with which it is customary to protect certain of the more ornate monuments. But none of the tombs are unduly obtrusive; nor, to readers of Schopenhauer, would it matter very much if they were.

Upsala's Cathedral is a cheerful two-spired building of red brick, still in process of elaborate restoration. It is of the colour of blood, and looks charming in juxtaposition with snow-clad roofs and a dome of blue sky. Unlike other cathedrals, it is not redolent of antiquity, or stuffed with curiosities which demand notice, and weary ere one can give the necessary attention to the building which holds them. Two or three of its contents dignify it amply. There is the dust of Gustavus Vasa. His effigy, recumbent between the effigies of his two wives, is a magnificent representation of a magnificent man. By the organ in the west end there is, too, a slab of stone with the name 'Linnæus' upon it. Eric the Holy also has a chapel to himself, with frescoes depicting, with no great talent, the simple vicissitudes of his career. This ended by decapitation in the market-place adjacent to the Cathedral. But the deed was wrought more than eight centuries ago. It is impossible to be lachrymose about an event so ancient. Besides, most Scandinavian monarchs in those days held their office in constant peril of some such fate. Our own royal histories of the middle ages are not pleasant reading; but the kings and queens of the north lived even rougher lives, and died more tragically than our sovereigns of those times. Eric the Holy was first buried at Old Upsala, three miles away. But with the desertion of that place—it consists nowadays of a church, a schoolhouse, three or four cottages, and a railway station—so precious a relic as Eric's body also left it. At one time it had a reputation for miracle-working. It does not work miracles now. Visitors stand and stare at the king's monument without uncovering. It is the custom in Sweden in winter—and doubtless in summer also—to go to and fro in the churches with your hat on your head. Even in the royal burial vaults in Stockholm this is so. It is a very desirable way of resisting the insidious attacks of catarrh, but it does not tend to produce a particularly reverential frame of mind.

Round the Cathedral, in what we should call its close, are the oldest of Upsala's secular buildings. They are of the seventeenth century, and very ugly. The University Museum is here. You may enter its vestibule unchallenged and see a variety of large-boned skeletons pendent and against its walls. The custodians, shrewd persons, do not stay in the way of the cold. From the north side of the close we pass to the open place in which the Danes killed Eric the Holy. On any ordinary winter's day here may be seen a number of blue-nosed old ladies, sitting swathed in woollens, and eyeing in a disconsolate—indeed, desperate—manner, first the stiff-frozen poultry and bits, or rather chips, of meat they have to sell; and secondly, the few passers-by, who either do not find the weather suitable for marketing, or have a sufficiency of frozen comestibles of their own at home. The Swedish winter has a certain convenience about it for the vendors of what we call 'perishable' articles. Nevertheless, the travelling Briton, with his home-bred prejudices about him, does not very much care to know that the beefsteak or the roast fowl before him was on sale a couple of months or so ere it was bought and cooked for his dinner. This feature of life in Sweden may well be productive of cheap living. But it makes one shudder gently to think of the state of things throughout the land when the spring thaw sets in. The thought is akin to the idea at the centre of one of the most vivacious and horrible of Edgar Poe's grisly stories.

It is befitting that Upsala should be famous for its hotels as well as its learning. Good living and erudition have ever gone hand in hand, the former as the complement, or—if you prefer it—the twin-sister of the latter. Thus, it is well worth while to dine in Sweden's chief university city in the evening, when the burden of sight-seeing is over, and ere the express is ready to return to Stockholm. The typical student, your neighbour, is not likely to be a gourmand. He enters with a friend, dressed in comely black—the short frock-coat of modern fashion—salutes with considerable exuberance such of his fellow-collegians as are also breaking bread in the place, cons the *menu*, which is quite inexpensive, and then orders his meal. This will comprise perhaps broth with an egg in it, or apple soup, a reindeer cutlet—excellently served at the 'Stads Hotel'—codfish, a pudding of some kind, and a bottle or two of Pilsener beer. He will pay a couple of shillings for the repast; and then, with a beaming countenance and readjusted spectacles, he may be expected to cross the vestibule to the musical café annexed, where his Professors also are assembled, and where—after having greeted the barmaid with a most profound bow, which she returns in exact measure—he smokes a penny cigar with his coffee, perhaps ending his evening's dissipation with a wine-glass of the naughty Swedish punch, which—let the Professors say what they please in its favour—is just twice as sweet as it ought to be, and cannot be provocative of intellectual lucidity and strength. If he is a very energetic young man, he will wind up with a singing practice. You may then chance on your way to the station to hear his lusty voice struggling for pre-eminence with the voices of three of his comrades. This quartette singing is a talent among the Upsala undergraduates. On the Swedish stage the white-capped student is never introduced without being made to take the fourth part in a combined anthem. But the summer is my time for him. When the snow has gone, and the birds have begun to carol, he and his friends will try their throats at a little sentimental serenading. Success attend them!

It were a sad omission in seeing Upsala the present, not also to get a glimpse of Upsala the past. The old town, as we have suggested, appeals more to the imagination than to the senses. Its situation some three miles away is not beautiful; nor is it an agreeable place to reach as we reached it, by open sledge in the teeth of a snow-storm from the north. Its surroundings are hedgeless, flat, and without trees. Cover the whole landscape with snow, and you may have an idea of its forlornness in winter. From the midst of the bleak desolation rise three distinct hillocks, naked and round, and between two of them the outline of an ancient saddle-backed church lifts itself. Such is Gamla Upsala, as it appears to the traveller attaining it from New Upsala.

The three hillocks are dedicated to the three divinities of the old Scandinavian mythology: Thor, Odin, and Freya. Anciently, when the pagan kings of Sweden had their residence here, there was a great temple set in a thick wood girdling the holy precincts. The temple was where the church now stands.

The old chroniclers tell of the dead bodies—human as well as animal—which hung from the boughs of these trees in propitiation of the northern gods. But there are none such now—scarcely, indeed, a tree convenient for them. Just the mouldy old church, the three mounds, and one more mound, the most significant of all! This last is the Hill of Justice. It is only thirty feet in height; but its conformation adapts it for the assemblage here in tiers of a considerable crowd. For centuries the kings of Sweden convoked their subjects hither for the renewal and execution of their laws. But since Gustavus Vasa's time, Old Upsala has been bereft of this dignity also.

Gamla Upsala is a place of memories, not strong spectacles. To appreciate it aright, one ought to spend, first of all, a few hours with the sagas of the north. It is of the epoch of the Vikings—and even earlier. To go from it to the railway station, and thence to gay Stockholm, is to traverse many centuries at a stage.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

Probably no work on general Natural History has been so much read as that charming book known as Gilbert White's *Selborne*. Although written more than a century ago, it is still regarded as a masterpiece. We may note also that it has given birth to a Selborne Society whose aim it is to minister to the love of nature which Gilbert White's volume so pleasantly inculcates. The original manuscript of the *Natural History of Selborne* remained till the other day in the writer's family, regarded in the light of an heirloom. But Time works changes, and the precious pages, in a capital state of preservation, recently found their way into a London auction-room, and were sold for close upon £300. The manuscript was evidently written with the greatest care and regularity, and it betrays no evidence of haste in its composition. The hard-pressed writer of to-day is apt to look back with feelings akin to envy, to times when literary work could be done so leisurely.

The Selborne Society recently held its annual meeting and conversazione in London, under the presidency of the Earl of Stamford. The chief objects of this Society are to preserve from needless slaughter or destruction birds, beasts, and plants which are beautiful and rare, and which unfortunately for that reason are in peril from the collector, or those who minister to his wants; to protect places of antiquarian interest or natural beauty from the hand of the vandal; and generally to promote the study of natural history. The Report of this admirable Society tells us that, although many new branches have been formed, there are still districts where much good work could be done. The Selborne Society, it may be mentioned, is trying to help forward the Rural Advertisements Bill, which measure is designed to stop the encroachment of advertisement hoardings in country districts. It will thus be seen that this useful Association is one which Gilbert White himself would most gladly have promoted, for its chief endeavour is to keep alive in the hearts of the people that love of the beautiful in nature which was the chief trait of his own character.

A new form of incandescent gas-burner is being tried in Paris, to which the name of its inventor, M. de Mare, has been given. It consists of an atmospheric burner of ingenious form, which will fit upon any ordinary burner, and which produces a blue flame of flat form. Across this flame is suspended a little cable of twisted platinum wires, carrying a fibrous material of the appearance of asbestos. The fibres under the action of the heat become highly incandescent, and will give a power of twenty-five candles with a consumption of only 2½ cubic feet of gas per hour. The burners are said to be of a lasting character; they require neither chimney nor globe; they will bear handling, and are inexpensive. Report thus speaks of M. de Mare's new incandescent system, which will doubtless find its way across the Channel before long.

Our readers will doubtless remember that a year or two back some little excitement arose owing to the occurrence upon bread of a blood-like stain, and it was not allayed until science pointed out the cause of the phenomenon in the presence of certain colour-producing micro-organisms. Of the great variety of such organisms found in water we are told, in a paper recently published in *Knowledge* by Mr C. A. Mitchell, that at least seventy-five give rise to a distinct colour upon cultivation. The colouring matter is soluble in alcohol and ether, but insoluble in water. The tint may, as we have seen, be crimson, or it may be pink, peach colour, yellow, green, or blue. The latter will sometimes account for the blueness of milk, in spite of the common idea that this appearance is due to dilution with water. These colour-producing organisms, or bacteria, are low forms of plant-life, but without the power of producing the chlorophyll, or green colouring matter, which confers upon the vegetable world generally so much beauty.

The Exhibition of Railway Appliances which is now open at the Imperial Institute, London, comprises some inventions which are of great interest not only to the railway world, but to the public generally. Among these we may mention Messrs Adams & Say's patent automatic fog-signalling apparatus, a contrivance which utilises the ordinary railway detonators, but entirely dispenses with the assistance of those extra men who are put on duty by the hundred when foggy weather comes on. The apparatus is worked from an ordinary signal-box, and by the same lever which actuates the semaphore. In another exhibit, known as Kershaw's patent signalling apparatus, the detonator is dispensed with entirely. In this case the operation of placing the semaphore at danger, causes a bar to rise into position by the side of the rail. This bar engages a catch on the engine, which causes a gong to ring close to the driver's ear. Another invention which may be commended is a spliced joint for rails, which does away with that jolt, jolt, jolt, which is such an uncomfortable feature of railway travelling.

At this same Exhibition there is shown a picture published in 1833, illustrative of travelling methods of that date, on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, which should be interesting to modern travellers, who are so much better off in the matter of comfort. The first-class carriages look terribly frail, and are modelled strictly upon the lines of the stage-coach, even to the extent of packing the luggage on the roof. There are no buffers, and at the rear is a truck which contains an open road-carriage, in which the owner and his family are seated, while the coachman and footman occupy their normal places. The third-class train is very different, the carriages being either of the nature of cattle-trucks, or built on the pattern of the *char-a-banc*, but in either case open to wind and rain. It is curious to note how, in those early days of railways, the pattern of the highway vehicle was so persistently adhered to. Perhaps it would have been difficult to make the public patronise the iron ways had not this concession been made.

It is said that one of the latest applications of paper is as a material for the sails of yachts. We need hardly say that a special kind of paper is employed for this novel purpose, and the following is given as an outline of the process. The pulp is treated with glue and bichromate of potash, which makes it quite insoluble after exposure to light; tallow and soluble glass are among the other ingredients added to it. The pulp is then converted into sheets in the usual way, and two are cemented together into one. After compression in a special machine, the paper is parchmentised by treatment with sulphuric acid, cleansed, and finally polished between heated metallic cylinders. The paper thus prepared is said to resemble cotton 'duck,' while at the same time it is air-tight, durable, and light, and can be joined as easily as ordinary sail-cloth.

It would seem that there is every probability of a serviceable horseless vehicle being produced before the close of the present century, but whether the motive power is to be found in steam, electricity, or petroleum, it is impossible to forecast. A steam-carriage for use on common roads was tried in London as early as the year 1828, and pictures of it are extant. Since that time inventors have not given much attention to the subject, possibly on account of legislative restrictions. In Paris, last year, there was a competition of horseless vehicles which aroused so much interest that it has just been repeated upon a far larger scale. The course for this novel race was along the high-road from Paris to Bordeaux and back, the total distance being no less than 750 miles. Nearly fifty entries were made, and in the majority of cases either steam or mineral oil formed the motive power. The best machines maintained a pace of about fifteen miles an hour. It will be interesting to see how far the competition will affect present means of travelling by the high-road.

The automatic alms distributor is an ingenious device of American origin, and is a reversal of the ordinary penny-in-the-slot machine in that it dispenses the coin instead of absorbing it. The contrivance is devised to act as a labour test for vagrants and beggars, for it exacts the turning of a handle one hundred times before it yields the coveted penny. And this labour is by no means lost, for it actuates machinery, electrical or otherwise, which will perform some actual work, or store up the energy expended for future use. The idea is certainly as good as it is novel, and will doubtless find many useful applications.

Mr Henniker Heaton, the ever active pioneer of postal reform, has recently pointed out the need of providing some means for the exchange, between the United Kingdom and the colonies, of trifling sums for the postage of replies to inquiries, for samples, and the like. The only means available at present is to pay sixpence for a post-office order for the required amount of 2½d! At the last Postal Union Conference, the United States proposed a common international stamp—an idea which Mr Heaton himself promulgated years ago. This proposal was negatived on the absurd plea of difficulty in settling the international accounts for such stamps. Mr Heaton now proposes an alternative remedy in the provision at the head post-offices in our large towns, of a supply of stamps of small denomination from all the British colonies. This much-needed reform would be a boon to commerce, and we might suggest at the same time that any extra expense would be met by the large number of such stamps which would be bought up by collectors.

Yet another voting machine has been produced, and as it differs in principle from those recently noticed in our columns, we gladly call attention to it. The inventor is Mr S. Handcock, of 37 Houndsgate, Nottingham. A ballot or voting box is provided, in which is arranged a series of recording boxes, each box being fitted with a counter somewhat similar to that upon a gas-meter. Through an opening a ball is dropped by the voter, and this ball causes the index in the counting-machine to make a record. The ball is immediately returned through another opening to the official in charge, ready to hand to the next voter. Every provision is made to effectually preserve the secrecy of the ballot, while at the same time great expense is saved in printing, and in dispensing with the services of enumerators.

A few months ago we commented in these columns upon a paper read before an American audience, on the virtues of Japanese lacquer, not only as an admirable varnish for ornamental articles, but as a wonderful preservative for metallic surfaces, such as ships' bottoms, and the like. We have since had many inquiries as to whether this lacquer is obtainable in Great Britain, and we are now pleased to be in a position to answer this question in the affirmative. Rhus & Co., Limited, have established works at High Wycombe, Bucks, where they not only undertake lacquering of all kinds, but supply the lacquer of various tints in large or small quantities. The crude material is imported direct from Japan, and is of such an indestructible nature that, when properly applied to wood or metal, neither the strongest acids nor alkalies seem to have the slightest effect upon it. It will even bear direct contact with flame for some minutes without any apparent change. The importers are endeavouring to acclimatise the tree from which the lacquer is obtained, and have a plantation at High Wycombe which gives promise of success.

It may be a matter of interest to note that the Japanese use a special form of brush for applying this lacquer. The specimen which we have seen resembles a flat piece of wood about eight inches by two, and half an inch in thickness. But the wood is in reality only a thin casing, holding the closely packed hairs, which are of human origin. The brush is treated as a lead-pencil; that is to say, as the hairs wear down, the wooden casing is cut away, so as to expose a fresh portion. The hair is far coarser than that of western nations, which latter would probably be too yielding for any such purpose.

It will be remembered that the painting of the extensive buildings at the recent World's Fair at Chicago was executed with a machine, which, by means of compressed air, sprayed the colour on to any surface required, and altogether dispensed with the services of the ordinary paint-brush. A compact machine for this work has recently been patented by a Manchester firm, and a description of it appears in *The Engineer*. The paint or tar is atomised and sprayed on the work with the help of an attached air-pump, the nozzle from which the liquid is projected taking the form of an injector. The machines are made in different sizes, and the smallest will cover three square yards of surface per minute. In a recent trial, a large girder with its connections was painted by this machine in two hours, representing an amount of labour which it was calculated could not be done by a man and brush in a day.

The Layman pneumatic boat is a most ingenious device by which a man can be made amphibious. The boat is made of india-rubber, and is of the shape of a horse collar, and from it depend two leg cases provided with coverings for the boots. The boat portion above, which is inflated with air, comes just below the waist, and the wearer can sit comfortably in it as he floats upon the water. The Layman boat can be used for shooting or fishing, or can be employed in the place of life-buoys on vessels. It can also be used for purposes of locomotion and enjoyment, for the foot-covers are provided with collapsible paddles, fashioned after the pattern of a duck's foot, so that propulsion becomes possible. A company has been formed to exploit the promising invention under the title of the Pneumatic Boat Company, and their offices are at 851 Broadway, New York.

From a paper recently read at the Institute of Civil Engineers by Messrs Barnaby and Thornycroft, names which have the weight of great authority, it would seem that the present speed attained by the screw-propeller has in the fastest craft afloat approached the limit of efficiency. Those, therefore, who have prophesied that in the future we shall have vessels crossing the Atlantic at speeds approaching that of the locomotive railway engine, must be satisfied that the present methods of ship propulsion must be superseded before such speeds can be attained. The paddle-wheel can certainly offer no solution of the problem, for even if it were suitable in other respects, its vulnerability would condemn it for employment in ocean work. Whatever form the propeller may take, it must, for its own protection, be hidden beneath the water-line.

The annual death-roll in India due to snake-bite is of such serious dimensions (see *Chambers's Journal* for June 22, 1895), that the Government have for many years done what they could to arrest the scourge. The reward for snakes' heads may be said to have failed, for there is more than a suspicion that the wily natives have been breeding snakes for the sole purpose of decapitation. Antidotes have also failed, although the virtues of one or the other remedy have been from time to time believed in and extolled. Among the more recent of these have been strychnine, permanganate of potash, and gold chloride. These remedies have recently formed the subject of experiments by chemists acting for the Government of India, with almost negative results. It is true that both the potash and the gold salt in attenuated solutions, when mingled with snake venom previous to injection into an animal, render the poison inert, but neither remedy has any effect when injected after the entrance of the venom. Neither of them can, therefore, be regarded as an antidote.

Professor Fraser of Edinburgh has attacked the problem of finding an antidote for snake-bite in an entirely different way, and there is every reason to hope that his labours will not be for nought. Starting with the commonly accepted theory, which he finds to be true, that a snake is itself immune to snake poison, he argues that this immunity must be due to the absorption in the blood of the poisonous matter. He next procured some venom, chiefly cobra poison, and ascertained by direct experiment the minimum lethal dose to a small animal. The dose was gradually increased, without any inconvenience to the animal; indeed, it grew fat under the treatment, until it could receive by subcutaneous injection enough poison to kill fifty creatures of its size. The next step showed that the blood serum from animals thus treated, was able, in varying conditions of administration, perfectly to prevent lethal doses of the venom of the most poisonous serpents from producing death in non-protected animals. The new remedy is named *Antivenine*, and its discovery may be regarded as one of the most important of the century.

HIDDEN TREASURE IN INDIA.

By W. Forbes Mitchell,
Author of *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny*.

During the first decade of my residence in India I was for some years associated with a wealthy banker named Lalla Muttra Pershaud, the Lahore agent of the great banking house known as 'The Seths of Muttra,' and from him I learned a great deal about the system of hoarding practised in all ages by the wealthy classes of India. He died at Brindabun about 1867. It may be explained that the title 'Lalla' as used by native bankers has no exact equivalent in English. It might with equal propriety be translated Master, Professor, or Banker.

Both in ancient and in modern times, one of the stock objections of European nations against trade with India has been that that country absorbs a large amount of the precious metals, which she never disgorges. It has naturally been asked what becomes of these treasures, for we do not find in India that abundance of either gold or silver which might naturally be expected; and the reply has always been that they are withdrawn from circulation as currency by being hoarded. For ages it has been a prevalent opinion in all Eastern countries that there is a vast amount of treasure hidden in the earth, which, unless found by accident, is entirely lost to man.

Regarding the hoarded wealth of last century, I need not quote the well-known story of Lord Clive and the treasures of Moorshedabad, as narrated in Macaulay's Essay on Lord Clive. That may be considered ancient history. I will confine myself to modern times. The columns of the *Statesman* afford proof of the system of hoarding still practised in Bengal by the most enlightened managers of an estate in the most enlightened province of the Empire. About seven years ago, in the course of the action for defamation brought against the *Statesman* by an ex-tutor of the late Maharajah of Burdwan, a deal of evidence came out about the hoarded treasures of Burdwan. When such is the case on a great property which has long been under the enlightened influence of the British Government, what may be expected from the States of the semi-independent Princes of Upper India? Let the following illustration suffice.

When up-country last year I heard that Chowringhee Lall, manager to Lalla Muttra Pershaud, already mentioned, was in Gwalior on some temporary business, and I called on him, as an old friend, at a place in the Lushkar where he was residing. Amongst other subjects, we discussed the action of Government in closing the Mints, and I asked his opinion about the possibility of a gold standard for India, and mentioned the fact that certain members of the Currency Association considered that fifty millions sterling of gold would be sufficient to provide India with a gold currency. The Lalla laughed the idea to scorn, and assured me that fifty millions would not suffice to replace the silver hoards of even one State. 'You know,' he said, 'how anxious the late Maharajah Scindia was to get back the fortress of Gwalior, but very few know the real cause prompting him. That was a concealed hoard of sixty *crores* (sixty millions sterling) of rupees in certain vaults within the fortress, over which British sentinels had been walking for about thirty years, never suspecting the wealth concealed below their feet. Long before the British Government gave back the fortress, every one who knew the entrance into the concealed hoard was dead, except one man who was extremely old, and although in good health he might have died any day. If that had happened, the treasure might have been lost to the owner for ever and to the world for ages, because there was only one entrance to the hoard, which was most cunningly concealed, and, except that entrance, every other part was surrounded by solid rock.

So the Maharajah was in such a fix that he must either get back his fortress, or divulge the secret to the Government, and run the risk of losing the treasure for ever. When the fortress was given back to the Maharajah, and before the British troops had left Gwalior territory, masons were brought from Benares sworn to secrecy in the Temple of the Holy Cow before leaving; and when they reached the Gwalior railway station they were put into carriages, blindfolded, and driven to the place where they had to work. There they were kept till they had opened out the entrance into the secret vault; and when the concealed hoard had been verified, and the hole built up again, they were once more blindfolded, put into carriages, and taken back to the railway station and re-booked for Benares under a proper escort.

Such is the purport of the story told to me. When I ventured to doubt its truth, and suggested that if the hoard had any existence in fact, sixty lakhs instead of sixty crores would be nearer the amount, Chowringhee Lall laughed at my ignorance, and declared that what he had told me was fact. He added that, although that particular hoard was the largest, there were several smaller ones, varying from sums of fifty lakhs to five and ten crores, some of which the Government got to know about, and had obliged the present Board of Regency to invest in Government of India bonds. On this I pointed out that such hoarded wealth could not be reconciled with the known revenue of the Gwalior State, even if the whole could have been hoarded for a generation. Chowringhee

Lall then explained to me that these hoards were not accumulated from the revenues of the State, but were the accumulations of the plunder gathered by the Mahratta armies in the good old times when the Mahrattas systematically swept the plains of India, and that, Gwalior being their capital, the whole of their vast plunder was accumulated and hoarded there.

Chowringhee Lall went on to tell me that for generations before the rise of the British power, his ancestors had held the post of Treasurer in the Gwalior State, and that after the British had annexed territories around Delhi, one of his great-grand-uncles had retired from the post of Treasurer of Gwalior with a fortune of twenty crores of rupees (twenty millions sterling). By great good fortune, all this money was quietly got into British territory, he declared; and fifteen crores of it are at this day bricked up in a secret vault under a Hindu temple dedicated to the goddess of wealth in the holy city of Brindabun. 'Now,' said the Lalla, 'if the Treasurer could accumulate so much, what were the accumulations of the State likely to be? The treasures of Gwalior form but a very small amount compared with the total of the known concealed wealth of India. All the silver would be brought out and replaced by gold directly the British Government decreed a gold currency for India.

'Five hundred millions of gold would be absorbed and concealed before a gold currency had been twelve months in circulation. Europeans, even those who have been in the country for years, have no idea of the hoarding propensities of even well-to-do natives, without counting the more wealthy bankers and traders. For example, my wife,' said the Lalla, 'has more than three lakhs of rupees hidden for fear of my dying before her, because I am much older than she is, and we have no son alive to inherit my property. And I know nothing about the place where this money is concealed.'

On this I asked how natives managed to accumulate so much wealth, and the Lalla replied: 'Natives don't spend like Europeans. Take the house of any well-to-do native merchant with an income of, say, a thousand rupees per month, and at the very outside, fifty to a hundred rupees would purchase the whole of the furniture in it. Beyond a few *purdahs* (curtains) and beds, furniture in the European sense does not exist. Even the very wealthy, although they may have a carriage and horses, possess neither books nor pictures nor any expensive works of art; and when a feast is given to their friends, a piece of a plantain leaf serves each guest for a dish, where Europeans spend hundreds of rupees in dinner and breakfast services of fragile but most expensive china and glass ware. All this the native saves and hoards. The wealthy conceal their accumulations of gold and silver in secret vaults, all except the ornaments which are reserved for and worn by their women.' I had to admit the force of all this reasoning.

'Natives don't believe,' he continued, 'in depositing their savings in banks or in investing them in Government paper. No Marwaree touches Government paper except for purposes of gambling. The trading classes in the large towns do use the banks to a great extent for temporary accounts, because they are a great convenience, instead of keeping money required for current business in their houses. But very few natives invest their money in the European banks at interest at long dates, because they know that the stability of these banks depends on the stability of the Government. The same ideas prevail in regard to Government paper. No Marwaree buys it as a permanent investment. The Marwarees merely use Government paper as a legitimate system of gambling.'

INDIFFERENCE.

WHAT cared I that myriad bluebells made a mist
adown the dingle,
That the woods were paved with violets, and the
meadow-lands with gold,
That the wavelets made sweet music as they broke
upon the shingle,
That the chestnut boughs were jewelled, and the
lily flags unrolled?

In the skylark's gayest chanson I could catch a
strain of sadness,
And an undernote of sorrow in the merle's
staccato lay,
For my love and I were parting, and I failed to
note the gladness
And the beauty of creation on that bygone
summer day.

And to-day I reck not, care not, that the birds have
ceased their chanting,
That the alder's plumes of sable sway in breezes
drear and chill,
That the sky is clouded over, and the scent of
flowers wanting,
That the last leaves of the chestnut chase each
other down the hill.

Though the bracken fronds are yellow, though the
swallows have departed,
Though the barns filled to bursting leave the
stubble bare and gray,
Though the summer bloom is over, I am glad and
happy-hearted,
For my lover has returned, and we'll part no more
for aye.

M. ROCK.

⁂ TO CONTRIBUTORS.

1*st*. All communications should be addressed to the 'Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.'

2*d*. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.

3*d*. To secure their safe return if ineligible, ALL MANUSCRIPTS, whether accompanied by a letter of advice or otherwise, *should have the writer's Name and Address written upon them* IN FULL.

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THE BOMBARDIER.

By GILBERT PARKER.

Author of 'Pierre and His People;' 'Mrs Falchion;' 'The Trail of the Sword,' &c.

CHAPTER I.

'I was with Raglan at the Alma, sir,' said the Bombardier, bringing his stick down smartly on the wooden pavement, and proudly straightening his shoulders. Keble Graves, the newly arrived curate, bowed respectfully, as though interested; but one or two loungers shrugged their shoulders and walked away: they knew that when the Bombardier was started upon this theme, there would be no fair division of the conversation. As an oracle the Bombardier was confident and even versatile; but he too often frowned over ramparts of knowledge when he ought to have smiled.

Hitherto, his position had been impregnable. He had checked the aspiring qualities of the aged rector's ritual; he had exposed the limitations of the schoolmaster's historical gifts; he had in an elaborate document, 'private and confidential,' corrected the theology of the Methodist pastor, and he had privately admonished the Presbyterian minister concerning his 'latitudinarianism, sir!' His waistcoat pockets were stuffed with newspaper scraps of argumentative value, and the suddenness of their appearance, and the intimidation which he threw into his manner, was confusing to his adversaries.

The village would often have found him impossible, were it not for one circumstance. There was only one graveyard in the village for the Protestant denominations, and it belonged to the Methodist body. But all controversial enmity was abandoned at the gateway of this plot, lying peacefully behind the old Wesleyan chapel. It was a plain and dreary chapel, with a harsh-toned bell; it was an unpretentious burying-ground. There were no granite monuments, no stately columns, no splendid marble slabs; there was but one fine tombstone.

It was here that the Bombardier laid aside his vanity. Looking at it, the village, usually uncompromising, lacking in sensitiveness, became considerate. There were no trees in this burying-ground, no shrubbery at all—only long grass growing from gravelly soil, reaching up about white head-stones; all new, all staringly recent; for the village was only twenty-five years old.

But beside this one grave, standing quite alone just behind the church, there grew a lilac bush, and on it in the summer time, flowers were always blooming. Its head-stone was a white marble shaft with a draped urn surmounting it, and the inscription ran:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF
ANTHONY SHEWELL, M.D.,
Only son of Bombardier Matthew Shewell;
who saved the lives of twelve children
of this village on the 12th of August 1887,
and died of his injuries on the same day.
He was born in the year 1862, and served his
Country, as a Lieutenant of
the 20th Battalion of Infantry, during the North-west
Rebellion of 1885, being grievously wounded at the
battle of Batoche, and losing thereby
the use of one arm. His grateful
fellow-citizens, of all denominations, erect
this memorial over his body, which was here
buried with military honours on the 15th
of August 1887.

'And thine age shall be clearer than the noon-day; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.'
Job, xi. 17.

The curate knew this portion of the old man's history, and he said in reply to the Bombardier: 'That was a hot day at the Alma—a brave fight, Bombardier.'

'Hot day! Brave fight, sir! Never any finer in the days of Alexander. Waterloo was right, and Lucknow an out-and-outer, but Alma was the *coup-de-grâce* of valour, sir!'

He drew back and brought his stick down savagely on the pavement again, as if expecting opposition, and was squaring himself for war.

After a moment of imperious waiting, he continued: 'If you would honour me, sir, in my humble quarters, we could discuss this great topic free from intrusion—from vulgar intrusion,' he added, as some lounger laughed. He recognised the voice—which said something about 'an eruption of buttons,' referring to the numerous buttons on the Bombardier's coat—as that of Abel Chown the fiddler. His eye flashed angrily. 'We have intelligence in this village, sir, but we have also minds that never rise above fiddle-faddle and fiddle-de-dee!'

He turned grandly away, the curate following. They crossed the long covered bridge, and, taking a path by the river-side, were soon at 'The Fort,' as the old soldier's little house was called. On a staff near the door a bit of colour was always flying, and on certain anniversary days, and on Sunday, the Union Jack flapped on the breeze from the river. The house was apart from all others, and higher than all others, in the village. In position and peculiarity it accorded with the Bombardier's personality. The living apartment—dining-room, library, and drawing-room all in one—was simply and severely furnished. A map of the Crimea hung on the wall, and a smaller one of the Alma itself was beside it, evidently drawn by the old soldier. Near these hung two artillery sabres crossed, a knapsack with its long leather straps and white facings, a pair of epaulettes, a field glass, and an engraving of Lord Raglan. Upon a rough side-table lay a Bible, a copy of Shakespeare's plays, an ancient medical treatise, a compendium called *Every Man his Own Lawyer*, a set of the Consolidated Statutes, and a History of the Crimean War. Beyond these again lay a number of clay pipes, and between the leaves of the Bible hid a pair of spectacles. Everything was in perfect order—no dust in the corners, no cobwebs on the ceiling, no rust on the sabres; and the heels of the pair of top-boots under the table were as faithfully polished as the toes. The keen observer would also have noticed here and there the touch of a woman's fingers—an embroidered curtain to some shelves, a pretty case for shaving-paper, and a fresh bunch of flowers in a tumbler on the window-sill.

The old man saw the flowers, and his usually grave face relaxed; then his stick tapped the floor gently.

'She never forgets the Bombardier,' he said, and he nodded proudly towards them. 'Never was a better girl than Sophie!' The curate looked at him encouragingly, and the soldier added with a slight trembling of the lips: 'She and Antony—yes, to have married her! Been like a daughter to me. Comes day in, day out, these years gone, to say a word or leave something.'

His eyes were on the flowers and his face seemed stern, but the sternness was only a frowning effort at repression. He stood so a moment in a kind of dream, and then brusquely offered his visitor a chair.

'Tell me something about your son, Bombardier,' the curate said gently. 'I believe he was much admired and beloved.'

'Ask his fellow-citizens,' said the old soldier proudly. 'Read what the journals of his country say of him.'

He opened a drawer of the table, and took from it several papers, and handing them over, said with a childlike honesty and vanity: 'Had his old father's daring, sir.'

Presently the curate rose, and, coming to the old man, laid a palm on his shoulder, and said: 'Bombardier, he lived his threescore years and ten.'

The soldier mutely answered by a nod, but he did not raise his head.

'You will meet again some day at parade, Bombardier?'

'At bugle call and parade!' was the slow reply.

A shadow fell across the sunlight at the door, and, turning, they saw a girl upon the threshold, bearing in her hand a dish of wild strawberries. Her eyes were full of a softened light; her face had a delicate colour. The Bombardier rose and said: 'Sophie! Sophie!—Mr Graves, this is Sophie!'

The girl flushed slightly, and straightway greeted the curate with a more graceful bow than might be looked for in a country village. Her father, while himself but a storekeeper, had married a clergyman's orphan daughter, and though the mother was long since dead, the girl carried in her veins the strain of breeding, with its self-possession and composure.

'I've brought you some strawberries, Bombardier,' she said. 'I've good news for you also. Mr Quackenbush's brother, the sergeant, who fought at Tel-el-Kebir, is coming here to live. He's been pensioned. So you'll have a comrade now.'

Here she drew nearer to the soldier. 'Just think, Bombardier'—and now she tapped his arm playfully, though a close observer might have seen apprehension in her eyes—'there you'll go marching down the street together, Bombardier Shewell, the hero of the Alma, doing garrison duty with Sergeant Quackenbush of Tel-el-Kebir.'

The soldier's brow darkened, and he said excitedly: 'What's Tel-el-Kebir to Alma, tell me that? What's a wretched rice-guzzling crew of Soudanese to fifty thousand Russians? If our men take a barb-wire fence now, they're heroes—bah! If they make prisoners of a dozen niggers, and dethrone a moth-eaten chief, they get promotion or the V.C. They're a pampered lot, sir! They're muddlers, and highflyers, and mollies, sir! and sergeant or no sergeant, I'll tell him so in his teeth when I face him. I'll'——

But the girl put her fingers gently on his lips.

CHAPTER II.

Sergeant Quackenbush arrived; a well-clothed, well-proportioned man of medium height, with grizzled hair, close-cropped moustache, and honest, hearty manner. The village was small, his coming was a matter of importance, and as he alighted from the stage-coach and walked up the street, with its wooden side-walks and projecting sign-boards, faces appeared at doors and windows, and children stood at the corners and gaped.

A few days after the sergeant's arrival, the two soldiers met in the village post-office, which was also a shoe-shop. The Bombardier was handed his weekly newspaper, and with his most martial air, retired to his corner among the 'cowhides and copper-toes.' He had just opened the paper and raised his large brass-rimmed eyeglass, when 'Sergeant Quackenbush! Sergeant Quackenbush!' was whispered down the shop.

The Bombardier's frown deepened, his dignity grew. The sergeant was a rough, genial man. His oily, loud 'How *are* you! how *are* you!' had a sound of the canteen and the sergeants' mess. It was backed, too, by a glow of health and robustness, in contrast to the Bombardier's spare frame and intellectual face.

The postmaster came from behind the counter. 'Sergeant!' he said impressively—'Sergeant Quackenbush, come this way, if you please.' Then, in a loud stage whisper: 'Bombardier Shewell—must be introduced.'

The Bombardier did not put down his paper. He appeared absorbed, and he started, as if roused from abstraction, when the postmaster said oracularly: 'Bombardier, I am proud to introduce two veterans to each other. Bombardier Shewell, Sergeant Quackenbush!'—a wave of the hand—'Sergeant Quackenbush, Bombardier Shewell!'—and a wave of the other hand. Then the postmaster rubbed both palms on his leather apron, adjusted his spectacles, and waited.

The sergeant frankly held out his hand, but the other with grave ostentation lifted his hat, and said: 'To have the honour, Sergeant Quackenbush!'

The sergeant's bluff good-nature seemed checked. He flushed, but he raised his hand, and, with a brusque military salute, said: 'Very proud, very proud, Bombardier!' The sergeant waited for the other to lead in conversation, but the Bombardier resumed his reading. The sergeant turned smartly on his heel, thrust his hands down in his pockets, and said to the postmaster, as though to ease the embarrassment: 'Infernal hot weather, sir!' regardless of the fact that he was addressing a local preacher, a leader at quarterly meetings, and the head of the Wesleyan choir.

As the postmaster drew back with a half-confused smile, he followed up the remark with: 'Hell, sir, hell, cinders and all!' and added thereto a clap on the back.

This straightway lost the sergeant an adherent. But if the sergeant thereby made for himself a secret enemy, he gained two friends on the instant: Abel Chown, the fiddler; and Ira Tinsley, the keeper of Tinsley's Hotel. Both were potent in their spheres. Abe, the fiddler, was a power among the young people.

Presently the Bombardier, giving a preparatory ahem, began to read aloud an extract from the newspaper he held: 'Our small but well-equipped force in Burma seems to have been completely annihilated. Are we depending now too much upon repeating-rifles and Nordenfelt guns, and not enough upon the force of numbers, shoulder to shoulder prowess, and the wide-eyed generalship which relieved Lucknow and conquered Acre? Is it possible that, even in war, machinery is displacing the old Norse strength, which has made and kept England what she is? Or does the secret lie in the supineness of a Government, which sets a thousand men the task of keeping in subjection, and, if need be, defeating in battle, a hundred times their number.'

At the beginning of this, the sergeant turned round with soldierly alertness; in the middle of it, he snapped his finger; when it was finished, he broke into a laugh of good-humoured disdain.

The Bombardier fiercely folded up the paper and put it in his pocket. Then he grasped his stick firmly, and frowned at the sergeant. 'Well, sir,' he said, 'what are you guffawing at?'

'At that beggarly rotten nonsense. You don't stand by that villainous bosh, do you?'

'Sir,' said the other, 'the glory of the British arms is dimmed—I will not say tarnished, sir, but dimmed. We are now an army of boys—boys! We kill by clockwork now, not by muscle, bayonet, and sabre. When I was with Raglan at the Alma, sir'——

'Oh, Alma be damned!' interrupted the other impetuously.

'Be damned, sir? Alma be damned, sir?' The old man's voice was thick with wrath, his fingers clutched his stick, and, as he heard Abe the fiddler laugh, a pulse of anger convulsed it upward menacingly.

At that moment a girl came in between, and her sweet voice said to the sergeant softly: 'Remember, he is old!' and then more loudly and persuasively to the other: 'Bombardier, I've been looking for you to row me across the river, the current is so strong!'

She put her arm through his, the stick was lowered slowly, and the tide of public feeling, which had been running strongly against the Bombardier, was stayed by the smile upon her lips. The fighting spirit in the sergeant's eyes melted away, and the Bombardier now only muttered to himself. He did not refuse to go, when she said: 'I'm in a hurry, Bombardier, and I promised to take the boat over.'

He walked with her through the silent onlookers, head erect, eyes turning neither to right nor left. The man of Tel-el-Kebir, as they passed him, said with honest straightforwardness: 'The Alma was all right, Bombardier; it was only a soldier's chaff—and there you are!'

But the Bombardier, with a quirk of the lips, which showed more anger than forgiveness, retorted: 'Men and soldiers fought at the

Alma, sir. We had no babies or *canaille* there!' Perhaps none present, save the sergeant, knew what *canaille* meant, but it sounded scornful and malicious.

As the two disappeared through the doors, the fiddler said: 'I'd got two new tunes for her weddin', an' it never came off!' He blinked a moisture from his eyes, which was part whisky, part feeling. Sergeant Quackenbush nodded thoughtfully and replied: 'I'll be friends with him, if he'll let me; and I'll guard-room this temper of mine.'

THE LAND OF PALM OIL.

ALTHOUGH the British settlements in the West of Africa have for long been the scenes of active commercial and missionary effort, the western portion of the Dark Continent has not become so familiar to the general reader as the central and eastern portions. For this there are several reasons, the chief of which probably is that no sensational books of travel have originated in the Land of Palm Oil. Yet, the Niger Territory is so important an adjunct to the British Crown—being not merely a Sphere of Influence but a well-defined Protectorate—that a little attention may well be devoted to its features.

The Niger River discharges itself into the Gulf of Guinea by a number of streams which percolate through the swampy, fever-haunted Delta of the Niger. Each of these river-mouths has a name of its own, but collectively they are called the Oil Rivers, because upon them are stationed 'the Factories' (that is, stores) and agencies of the traders in palm oil.

The largest of these mouths is the Nun, and it is this which is most used in connection with the navigation of the Niger proper. Near the entrance of the Nun is Akassa, the great depôt-station for the whole of the Niger territories, and the place of loading and discharge for the Liverpool steamers. Akassa is a busy place, with a constant coming and going of sea and river steamers, and an interminable crowd of 'natives' rolling an endless stream of palm-oil casks along the wharfs, or carrying great tusks of ivory to the ships. It has a background of dark, impenetrable forest, and in itself is brighter and prettier looking than the dismal, malarial stations on the other Oil Rivers (such as Bonny, Calabar, &c.), where Nature seems to be at her ghastliest and man at his worst. At Akassa the officials of the Royal Niger Company have even attempted gardens and other works of civilisation and culture; but vegetation does not thrive, and the vapours from the surrounding mangrove swamps make the climate very enervating for Europeans. As a consequence, the permanent white residents are few, although the station is usually well filled either with new-comers or with invalided and time-expired men waiting to get 'home.' The natives of the Akassa district belong to the Brass tribes, and they were formerly dangerous savages, whose chief occupation in life was in causing and in plundering wrecks; but now they seem to be inoffensive enough in their villages among the mangroves.

Authorities differ as to the origin of the name of the river, which Ptolemy called *Nigeir*, and other old writers *Niger*. The old theory that the name is the Latin for 'black' seems now generally abandoned; and Dr Brown's theory seems the most reasonable one—that the name is probably derived from the same root as the Berber *Ghir*, which is applied to many streams in North Africa. The river is, however, nowhere called Niger by the tribes along its course, but by a variety of names (such as Joliba, Kworra, Ujimini, &c.), all or most of which just signify 'The Great Water.'

Prior to Mungo Park's journey in 1796 from Gambia to Boussa on the Middle Niger, almost nothing was known about this river; and after Park, not much more was discovered until the brothers Lander in 1830 succeeded in descending the stream all the way from Boussa to the Nun mouth. Thereupon followed numerous trading expeditions, and in 1841 and 1854, some Government surveys of the Niger and its affluent the Benue were made. Meanwhile, commercial establishments, both British and French, were multiplying; and in 1882 these were all amalgamated in an English company, which a few years later was incorporated and chartered as the Royal Niger Company, charged with the political and general administration over the whole region in the basins of the Niger and Benue, of which Great Britain assumed the Protectorate in 1885. Sir Claude Macdonald was in 1889 despatched by the Government on a special mission to make personal examination of the condition of the Niger territories, and the views of the various kings and chiefs; and an interesting account of this mission was written by Captain Mockler-Ferryman, who acted as Sir Claude Macdonald's secretary.

For some distance above Akassa, the country remains flat and the scenery uninteresting, if not indeed positively dismal. But after passing the confluence with the Wari River both the surroundings and the people improve. The inhabitants of the Niger Delta are of poor physique and a very low type of humanity—all fetich worshippers, and many of them cannibals. The farther one gets from the coast the higher do the tribes seem to rise in the human scale, although when one reaches Lokoja, which is the point of junction of the Niger and its great arm the Benue, one meets the advancing wave of Mohammedanism, which is spreading down from the interior towards the sea, with its usual accompaniment of slave-raiding horrors. On the Delta, too, missionary enterprise seems to have effected little, if any, change in the people; but higher up the river one finds encouraging results.

The palm oil, which is the staple product of the Lower Niger, as of the West Coast generally, is obtained from a wild palm. The natives use it both for cooking, for burning, and for smearing their bodies with. It is to them, indeed, a great deal more than ghee is to the Hindu. The fruit of the tree grows in large prickly clusters, and its skin is of a bright red or orange colour, turning to yellow when ripe. The pulp is rather bitter in taste, and is reddish-white in colour. Within the fruit is a stone or kernel, about the size of a filbert. The natives, gathering the fruit when ripe, bruise it gently in a wooden mortar, and then boil it with water in large caldrons; whilst simmering, it is stirred with a stick, to separate the pulp from the kernels, which sink to the bottom and are reserved for other uses. The oil, which floats on the surface of the water as the boiling proceeds, is skimmed off, and placed in earthenware vessels.

The Niger affords two kinds of palm oil. The one is of the consistency of butter, and is called 'hard' oil, and for this the only market is England. The other is liquid, and is called 'soft oil,' and for this the highest price is obtained in all the European markets. There is hardly any difference in the quality, but only in the method of preparation. The buying price on the river ranges from five pounds to six pounds ten shillings per cask of two hundred and twenty gallons; and it is calculated that about eight thousand tons are annually exported from the Niger to Europe, where it is employed in making candles, soap, railway-grease, &c. Both the trading and the transport to the 'Factories' is carried on chiefly by women, after the manner of the noble savage; and the streams of females, each with a pot of palm oil on her head and a baby on her back, are among the every-day sights of the country. At the Factories the oil is carefully measured by the agents, and is paid for in salt or cotton cloth. Then it is casked and stored in the station, waiting for transport down the river, to be put on board the ocean steamers at Akassa.

The commodity next in importance in the export trade of the Niger is ivory, although this can hardly be regarded as an increasing trade. It is mostly in the hands of Hausa (native) merchants, who convey it vast distances.

Few persons who finger their ivory-handled knives at dinner think of the enormous distances that have been traversed by the smooth pleasant-feeling material, of the incalculable labour it represents, and of the suffering, and perchance bloodshed, which have marked its transit since it fell with some mighty elephant in a remote African jungle. Some who know Central Africa say that if it were not for ivory, the raiding and selling of slaves would soon cease. If this be true, then this beautiful product of nature stands in the civilised world as the representative of the traffic in human flesh, which annually makes countless thousands mourn.

Not until the traveller gets well up the river towards Lokoja, where the stream of the Benue unites with that of the Middle Niger, does the scenery become at all romantic, but at Lokoja (which is peopled mostly by Mohammedans) there is a fine stretch of mountain and forest view, and an immense sheet of water, formed by the junction of the streams, more than three miles wide. Lokoja is an important centre both in trade, in missionary enterprise, and in the administration of the Niger Territories, and it is here that one encounters in full force the wave of Islamism, which has flowed down from the north, and which is now struggling with Christianity for mastery over the native tribes. The problem of the future is how far British influences and methods will succeed in checking its further flow towards the coast. Captain Ferryman seems to think that more drastic measures than teaching and preaching will be needed, and that, in fact, Islam will not be defeated there without force of arms sooner or later; but although the struggle may be long, he has no doubt of the ultimate result.

Leaving Lokoja on the left and steaming up the Benue River, one enters a stream that was absolutely unknown to Europeans until sixty years ago. The mouth of it was discovered by the brothers Lander in 1830; and in 1833, Messrs Laird and Oldfield managed to paddle up to a place called Dagbo, which is about one hundred miles above the confluence with the Niger. No further attempt was made for nearly twenty years, until Dr Barth crossed over from Lake Chad, and struck the upper waters at Yola, a place which now marks the eastern limit of the British Protectorate. Indeed, the Benue was for long supposed to flow out of Lake Chad; but this is now known not to be the case.

Trade on the Benue only dates from 1874, and has not as yet attained great dimensions; but the land along this river is reported to be of great promise, and it is believed that this will ultimately prove one of the most remunerative portions of the Niger Territories.

One of the principal items of trade here is rubber, which is thus collected. The natives make an incision in the tree, and allow the sap to flow over their naked arms until it forms a thick coating. When this has hardened, it is scraped off and rolled into balls, which are known as 'Niger lumps,' and which are taken to the Factories, where they are worth in goods the equivalent of ninety to one hundred pounds per ton. This rubber sells in England at from one shilling to two shillings per pound, according to quality—for there are many varieties of the rubber-tree.

Shea butter is another product. This is obtained from the Shea-tree (*Bassia Parkii*), a handsome tree resembling an American oak, the fruit of which is a nut about the size of a walnut. The treatment is much the same as that followed in the manufacture of palm oil, above described, and the solid oil, or butter, has medicinal properties which the natives appreciate. In market value, Shea butter is pretty much that of palm oil, and in England it is used largely in the manufacture of ointment, although it has numerous other uses.

One of the principal tribes of the Lower Benue basin is the Basa tribe—an industrious, energetic, and muscular people, who are heathens and idol worshippers. Not much is known of their customs, but their mode of burial is curious. They wrap the corpse in white cloth and place it in the grave in a standing position along with a bag of provisions for the journey to the other world. A whole month is spent in mourning, and then there is a general meeting of the relatives, who spend a day in feasting and dancing.

One of the chief towns on the Benue is Loko, a clean place of some four thousand inhabitants, composed of a collection of round-topped huts, like hayricks, fenced by matting seven feet high. This is both an important station of the Royal Niger Company and also the capital of the Mohammedan State of Nassarawa, which is ruled over by an Emir. Of this potentate Captain Ferryman gave the following description :

'The Emir himself rode down to the river bank, surrounded by a large company of armed men ; their horses were poor weedy-looking things, and weighed down with huge high-peaked saddles, gaily decorated with Hausa leatherwork, but nevertheless they *were* horses, and about the first we had seen in West Africa. The Emir himself was clothed in voluminous garments of white and dark blue Kano cotton. On his head was a turban of white, hung round with numerous leather-sewn charms ; and hiding his features was the usual face-cloth of dark muslin. Embroidered slippers and a heavy cross-hilted sword completed his dress as a Fula chief. He was received with much ceremony, a guard of honour of the Royal Niger Constabulary being drawn up on deck ; though I am not certain that he understood at first what it meant, and he probably thought that he had fallen into a trap. However, his litham concealed any fear his face might have shown, and when he entered the Commissioner's presence he seemed quite at home. The Emir himself is a man of about thirty-five years of age, and his Wuzeer, who appears to be the astuter of the two, is perhaps a trifle younger. Both, I should say, are good samples of ruffians of the deepest dye, though they were the pink of politeness during the interview, showering down compliments on our heads, which taxed the ingenuity of our Hausa interpreter to reply to in corresponding terms. However, half an hour saw the business through ; and we, at all events, were not sorry when the Emir rose, for his retinue, who had crowded in after him, were of the unwashed order, and our little saloon, for the nonce the durbar-hall, was rapidly becoming laden with a most pungent African bouquet.'

The grievance of this worthy was that the Royal Niger Company would not sell him rifles and ammunition, whereby he might follow the custom of his father and grandfather in hunting down the pagan tribes and capturing slaves. Needless to say that the Commissioner of 'The Great White Queen' gave him to understand that she hated that sort of thing, would not allow it, and had forbidden her subjects to sell arms for such purposes.

The Benue headquarters of the Niger Company are at a place called Ibi, a town belonging to the Juko tribe, who have succeeded in escaping from the Mohammedan influence which oppresses surrounding tribes, and have placed themselves under British protection. The whole country about here is fertile and well wooded. Above Ibi, the river is a magnificent stream more than a mile wide, with a succession of important native States stretching along both banks. Here is one little sketch of the physical aspects :

'Few villages or inhabitants were seen during our day's run of fifty miles, the country still remaining densely wooded, with occasional open plains of high grass. At dusk, the river had slightly narrowed, and we lay between two high black walls of impenetrable forest : once we thought we heard a lion's distant roar, but otherwise all was magnificently still—not a ripple on the water, not a rustle among the trees—and as we sat on deck gazing pensively into the black night, the moon, almost at the full, rose gradually above the dark belt of forest, and shed a silvery lustre over the water. It was one of the grandest night-scenes I can remember, and certainly one which can never be equalled out of the tropics.'

Farther on, the country becomes more open and more thickly populated. Cultivation, too, is actively pursued, as also a number of native industries such as leather-working, brass-working, and cloth-dyeing with native indigo. Altogether life on the Benue seems on a higher plane than in the basin of the Lower Niger. Yola, the capital of the Mohammedan State of Adamawa, through which passes the boundary-line of the Anglo-German agreement of 1886, lies at the foot of a fine group of mountains, on the slopes of which it is proposed to establish a sanatorium for the European traders. Above Yola, the Benue presents much variety of scenery and character ; but although the mission was continued for some distance up the stream, we shall stop at the boundary-line. Suffice it to say that much interesting exploration was done, both on the upper waters of the Benue and also on the Middle Niger (or Kworra) above Lokoja.

In conclusion, it may be said that the commercial potentiality of this region is limited in range ; but it remains to be seen if any mineral resources can be discovered, or cultivation developed so as to make agriculture a remunerative industry. The climate of the Niger Delta is, as it has always been, deadly for Europeans ; but beyond the junction of the Niger and Benue it will compare favourably with India. In these inner parts Europeans may safely reside for three or four years at a time, and even longer if hill sanatoriums be established. But there is no field for European colonisation in the Niger Territories.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

By G. Manville Fenn.

CHAPTER XIV.—FOREIGN POLICY.

'What I expected,' said Wynyan to himself as he walked through the Enclosure. 'Fate plays strange pranks with us.' Then getting into the Mall, where it was comparatively lonely among the big elms and planes, he walked slowly up and down thinking of his position. Only a few days before with everything bright and hopeful, a grand career his, and fortune, perhaps love ; now, comparatively a beggar, with life to begin all over again.

He thought of Brant's arbitrary conduct, and felt that it was open to him to dispute his right, but pride seemed to forbid that—at any rate then. What more calm deliberation would do he could not say. But there was the invention—the great motor, surely he had a half-right in that! No: he felt that he had not. Everything had been done in Dalton's name; Dalton had sold it; and he, the inventor, had thought of nothing but bringing it to perfection. The business arrangements had all been Dalton's, and the negotiations with Government in his behalf.

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'I'll think no more,' he said at last, 'or I shall go mad;' and he was about to make for the station and go east to the little Inn, but almost involuntarily his steps led him in another direction, northward through the Green Park, across Piccadilly, and into the quiet repose of Mayfair.

He must see the house, he told himself, for love and pity were strong and masterful now. He would only see the darkened windows. He dare not call: it would, he felt, be an outrage; but he must pass. Who could say but that if she cared for him she might not feel something of the bond of sympathy between them?

He passed twice with the feeling of despair upon him greater than he could bear. It was as he had pictured—the great mansion with every window blank and dead-looking; and yet within it still the very soul of his smitten life.

He walked on mechanically, avoiding people by instinct, seeing nothing but the interior of Dalton's darkened chamber, hearing nothing, not even the wheels of a carriage, and the trampling of horses keeping close to the kerb, and almost brushing him as he went on. Then the horses were checked, and there was a quick step behind him.

'Beg pardon, sir — my mistress — will you speak?'

Wynyan looked wonderingly at the servant in plain livery who had accosted him. Then he saw close behind a pair of handsome bays champing their bits, and scattering the foam, and beyond them a face projected from a brougham, and a little black gloved hand beckoning.

'Isabel Endoza,' he said to himself, and walked back eagerly. 'She would have news.'

The face was withdrawn, but he saw now that it was thickly veiled; and as he reached the carriage door, the hand was held out and clung to his, while a wave of emotion rose and choked all utterance as he heard sobbing, and a piteous voice murmured: 'Oh, Mr Wynyan—oh, Mr Wynyan! Poor, poor Renée!'

'Hush!' he whispered, as he stood holding the hand which still clung to his. Then hurriedly: 'Pray—pray tell me how she is.'

'I—I can't talk to you here. I have just come from the house. I—— Tell the servant to open the door. Come in: come home with me. If I speak now, I shall cry so that every one will hear.'

As she spoke she signed to the footman; the door was opened, and, hardly knowing what he did, Wynyan entered; the door was closed; he heard the word 'Home!' and then they were being driven rapidly through the streets with his companion leaning back in the corner of the luxurious carriage, holding her handkerchief to her face beneath her veil. At the end of a few minutes it was removed, but the veil kept down.

'You will come home with me, Mr Wynyan. Papa said I was to ask you to one of our evenings; but there will be no evenings now for a long, long time. Perhaps he will be at home. We only heard an hour ago, and papa is heart-broken, for he loved Mr Dalton: the grandest Englishman, he said, that he had ever met.'

'This is no time for paying visits, Miss Endoza,' said Wynyan coldly. 'Pray, tell me: how is your friend?'

'Don't—don't, pray, don't ask me here,' cried Isabel, bursting out, weeping loudly. 'I—I will tell you as soon as I can.'

Just then, Wynyan was conscious of a handsome, middle-aged Jewish-looking man cantering by the brougham, and bending low to raise his hat before dropping back.

'Yes, I see you—you dreadful stupid man,' said Isabel, quickly returning the bow.—'It is a friend of papa's. He is always watching for the carriage, so that he may bow.'

Wynyan hardly heard her, and there was silence till the carriage drew up at one of the great mansions in Victoria Street near to the Abbey.

'Please come and let me tell you,' said Isabel.

Hardly knowing what he was doing, Wynyan handed his companion out, and followed her into the hall and up the blank stone staircase to the first floor, where his companion touched the electric bell.

'It seems no use to ride up in the lift such a little way,' she said as the door flew open, and the chilly blankness of the staircase gave place to a luxuriously furnished entry; and the next minute they were in a long drawing-room, dimly lighted, and with the noise of the great street deadened by double windows.

Here Isabel tore off her veil and gloves, threw herself into a lounge, buried her face in her hands, and burst into a passion of sobs and wails so wildly hysterical that Wynyan became at last startled, and advanced to her to speak imploringly.

'Miss Endoza, pray, pray, do not give way like this,' he cried.

'My poor, dear, darling Renée. Oh, it is too dreadful. What shall I do?—what shall I do?'

The wild fit of grief, however, was not lasting, and soon after the pretty little creamy face, with its great dark piteous-looking eyes, was turned up to Wynyan.

'Oh, do, do, please, sit down,' she cried. 'It is so good of you to come when you—we are in such trouble.'

Wynyan sank into the chair she pointed to, and sat frowning and stern as the girl liberally used her handkerchief.

'I—I am better now,' she said, with a sob coming at intervals, as if the storm of passionate grief had been like herself, tropical but short. 'Papa came and told me just as I was going for a drive. Dear, dear Mr Dalton, he was always so good, and seemed to love me as if I were his own. I—I went there directly, Mr Wynyan, for I knew she would see me, poor darling, and we cried together till dearest Miss Bryne begged me to go, and I had just come away when I saw you.'

'How is she?' said Wynyan huskily.

'Broken-hearted, but so pale and beautiful. Oh, how I love her, my own sweet, dearest friend. Isn't it terrible, Mr Wynyan?'

He bowed his head; he could not speak. One moment he was angry with the shallow, frivolous creature; the next, pitying and sympathetic, for she had been there not half an hour back, held Rénée sobbing in her arms; and she did, she must love her, to show such grief.

'I knew how terribly grieved you would be, Mr Wynyan; it is such a relief to talk to some one who knows and loves her. Oh, my poor, poor darling friend!'

Isabel burst into another paroxysm of weeping, in the midst of which Wynyan started. He was conscious of some one having approached silently over the thick carpet, for he had not heard a sound.

'So good of you to call, my dear Mr Wynyan,' said the Count, holding out both hands to press them upon the young Englishman's shoulder. 'Friendliness is so welcome at a time of pain like this. Forgive my dearest child for her grief. She is, as you English call it, broken-hearted about her friend.—She weeps, too, for our noble-hearted Dalton, Mr Wynyan,' he added, as he sank into a chair near the visitor. 'I have lost a friend I loved. And you'——

'The man who has been to me as a father, sir,' said Wynyan, in a voice husky from emotion.

Isabel sobbed gently.

'Ah,' said the Count gravely. 'These losses are, as you say, irreparable. I made a friend, a trusted friend, of Robert Dalton, and he has gone. The greater reason why those left to us should be drawn closer together. Not a good Catholic, Mr Wynyan. My people would call him a heretic. But I love such opponents of our Church. A true gentleman, sir.'

'As ever breathed,' said Wynyan.

'He loved my child.'

'Yes—yes—yes,' sobbed Isabel wildly.

'As we love him and his. Ah, well, life is short. There is so little time to mourn in this busy world.—And you, Mr Wynyan, of course you will take the lead with the great business. I must do my duty to my country. There is a great transaction I must see you about.'

'You will not see me, sir,' said Wynyan gravely. 'Mr Brant Dalton will, I presume, be the principal now. My connection with the firm has been severed.'

'Indeed!' said the Count with a look meant to be one of surprise. 'I am grieved to hear that. But you, Mr Wynyan, with your skill as an engineer, must have the choice of more than you can undertake.'

'I don't know, sir,' said Wynyan, rising with a bitter smile. 'We shall see. I have much to think about and do, sir. I thank Miss Endoza for giving me tidings of Miss Dalton.'

'Ah, yes, she has been. You could not call at present?'

'Nor in future, sir,' said Wynyan sadly.

'But you will call here, Mr Wynyan. I shall be so glad to speak to you about our dear friend. My child, too, will have news—she will be so much with poor Rénée. My house is at your disposal, sir, and you will be very welcome.'

'Must you go—so soon?' said Isabel with a piteous look, as she held out both her hands.

Wynyan bowed once more.

'I shall tell dearest Rénée that you called, and when you come next I shall have so much to say. Good—good-bye.'

She sank back sobbing again, as her father rang and then accompanied his visitor to the door.

'Good-bye, Mr Wynyan,' he said, shaking hands impressively. 'Pray call again soon. I may not be at home, but my child here will have news for you, I know.'

Wynyan went down pleased, and yet angry. He could not feel that it was all real, and yet he told himself that it must be.

'Foreigners are not so calm and impassive as we are. Would he make me so welcome if he knew that I am little better than a beggar?'

In the great drawing-room he had so lately left, Villar Endoza was walking slowly up and down with a memorandum book in one hand, a gold pencil-case in the other.

'Yes, my child, it is very sad; but men will die even in our sunny land.—But your face looks terrible.'

'Yes, little papa; but I am going to bathe it with some wash. Poor, dearest Rénée did cry so all over it.'

'Of course- of course,' said the Count.—'He would be invaluable to us. He must come.'

'I thought you said Mr Brant must come, little papa,' said the girl, dabbing her red eyes.

'Yes, little one; but Dalton had not died then. This man is worth five thousand Brants, and now he is ours. I knew it would be so, as soon as I heard the bad news.'

'Knew what, little papa?'

'That Brant would send him away.'

'But how could you know so soon?'

The Count laughed.

'How do I know so many things, little one?' he said.

'I know,' she cried, 'that nasty Señor Levvinson tells you. Oh, how I hate him!' she cried excitedly, with her eyes flashing and her prettily curved lips drawn from her pearly teeth.

'My beautiful little bird must not hate anybody,' said the Count, stopping to tap her cheek with the gold pencil. 'She must smile and be kind, even to Mr Levvinson while he serves me well.'

'Very well, little papa,' she said, pouting.

'That is my good little angel,' he said playfully. 'Now go and bathe the beautiful eyes.—Look.' He drew her forward so that she could see her face in the nearest mirror, and she uttered a cry of alarm.

'Almost too bad to show the brave, handsome young Wynyan, eh?—There; go to your room, sweet one. I have so much to think and write.'

STOWAWAYS.

In future, stowaways discovered on board British ships will be more adequately punished when taken before a magistrate than hitherto. It has been found that, just as there are vagrants on land, so they abound on the sea. Under section two hundred and fifty-eight of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854, it was provided that if a person secreted himself and went to sea in a ship without consent, he was liable to a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds, or to imprisonment, without or with hard labour, for any period not exceeding four weeks. This short term of incarceration, however, seemed to have no deterrent effect. If the matter is considered for one moment, it will readily be seen that light sentences for such an offence only tended to fit prisoners for another voyage under similar conditions. Arriving in port after a long and probably stormy trip, the professional stowaway would hardly care to ship himself off again at once. His previous mode of obtaining a livelihood would unfit him for getting one so easily on shore; so Her Majesty's prison for a week or two was a perfect Eldorado to such a being. It prepared him to follow his peculiar calling with renewed vigour.

This is no fanciful picture, as shipowners have found to their cost. For years, complaints were continually being lodged by shipowners before the authorities in London, Southampton, Liverpool, and Greenock, respecting the lenient way in which persons who had defrauded them of their passage-money were dealt with by law. Many of the rogues were allowed to go free, in order to avoid the expense of a prosecution which resulted in so little. Not only did the shipowners have to pay the costs of the prosecution, but witnesses had to be brought from the ship at considerable trouble and expense. Even then, the magistrate was often not satisfied with the evidence as to 'secretion,' in which case the prisoner invariably got discharged from custody.

Now, however, matters are somewhat improved in this respect. By section three hundred and thirteen of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894, the powers of magistrates are extended, and, as one stowaway has already found to be the case, can be sentenced to three months' hard labour. In this instance the prosecution was undertaken by the Castle Line, running steamships between London and the Cape. They have suffered a good deal at the hands of the free travelling fraternity for a long time past. Indeed, only a few months ago, a stowaway who managed to escape the punishment he so well merited, on a technical point, had the audacity, two days after his dismissal, to apply to the same magistrate in London for a summons against the owners of the vessel, whom he had defrauded to the extent of sixteen guineas, plus the costs of the prosecution, for detaining a box of tools belonging to him. The applicant was referred to the County Court.

An excellent illustration is on record, showing what a number of voyages can be made by one stowaway within a comparatively short space of time. The individual in question began at Glasgow, and concealed himself on a boat about to start for Liverpool. Upon reaching that place, he shipped himself on a liner bound for Boston, Massachusetts. This vessel had to bring him back again, by direction of the United States officials. The cause of this will be explained later on. Again, an Atlantic liner was patronised; but he was discovered at Queenstown. Some of the passengers, pitying his wretched appearance when brought on deck, subscribed sufficient money to pay the culprit's passage to New York. Two or three more times he managed to reach Liverpool, subsequently having his fare paid, before again reaching American ports.

This game, however, got played out, and he set out for the Far West, travelling as usual free of expense. Arriving at San Francisco, he stowed himself away on a ship loading for Melbourne. Thence he got to Yokohama, Shanghai, Hong-kong, Singapore, Calcutta, Bombay, Port Said, and Malta. At each place he landed, and travelled by another vessel. At Malta, this enterprising stowaway actually concealed himself on board a British warship—H.M.S. *Serapis.* At Port Said he was conveyed ashore, and given into the hands of the British Consul with instructions to send him to England. This was done; and in due course the prisoner was brought up at a London police court, where, being remanded, all the foregoing facts were elicited. Were the incidents not so well authenticated, it would be very difficult to credit such a story.

In addition to being a nuisance and expense, stowaways incur great danger of a violent death. In one instance a man hid himself away in a chain locker, and when the anchor was hove-up, the unfortunate creature was crushed to death, the noise made by the steam winch and the rattling of the chain drowning his cries. Upon another occasion, a man was found dead under the main hatch of one of the National Line of steamers. He had concealed himself before the vessel left Liverpool, and died of suffocation. Curiously enough, in his pocket was found a novel entitled *Doomed on the Deep.* In a third case, a man hid himself in the forepart of a steamer bound for London. While proceeding up the river Thames, she collided with another steamer, and the stowaway was crushed to death.

With regard to vessels in the American trade, the hardships that have to be borne by captains having the misfortune to be patronised by stowaways are very great. Should one succeed in landing, upon arriving at any of the United States ports, the captain is liable to a fine of one thousand dollars. When a stowaway is found, the authorities have to be informed of the fact directly port is reached. He is then taken ashore, and maintained at the vessel's expense until she is ready to return, when he is conveyed on board again, and has to be taken whence he came. The singular number is used in the foregoing, but that is usually exceeded. In August 1891, forty-five stowaways were discovered on board the steamer *Highington*, when on a voyage from Liverpool to Galveston. Fortunately, this was done in time to enable part being landed in the Mersey, and the remainder at Waterford—for they were found in two batches. Last November, several sets, varying from five to sixteen in number, were returned from America in the manner already described.

Stowaways are very common in the East, and many as well as curious dodges are resorted to by natives—well able to pay the passage-money—in order to obtain a trip for nothing. Thus, in June last, six Japanese girls packed up in matting were removed from the Japan mail steamer before leaving Nagasaki for Shanghai. In April of the same year, nine Japanese men and one woman stowed themselves away on a vessel sailing from Yokohama to San Francisco, and of course had to be taken back again. Eight Chinamen concealed themselves on a steamer trading between Penang and Rangoon. When found, the captain had them all well flogged ; and upon reaching port, each one received from the magistrate a month's 'rigorous' imprisonment.

The days of the stowaway—so far as this country is concerned—are numbered. Three months' hard labour is too long a spell of industry for such folk. Gradually they will become extinct, and the sooner this comes to pass the better.

HOW THE MAN-EATER WAS KILLED.

Lieutenant Wallace, of the 42d Bengal Native Infantry, sat moody in his bungalow. He had reason to be moody, if, indeed, love and reason ever run in a curricle. But the immediate cause of his moodiness was the following cruelly courteous foolscap letter : 'Sir—I have the honour to inform you that I have complied with your request, by placing your name on the list of candidates for the vacant post in the Jungle Reclamation Office, where it stands No. 315. Pray, refer to that number in any further communication you may desire to make.'

'Further communication be big D-d,' exclaimed the young officer as he flung the sheet of foolscap into the fireplace.

'What's up now?' cried his bosom friend, Wilford Bosanquet, bursting in upon him without ceremony.

'Oh ! confound it ! Only the old tale.—Any news?'

'Nothing newer than what would be stale enough to anybody but a moping owl like you. But of course nobody—no rational being—would expect *you* to know what every one else was talking about the day before yesterday. Queen Anne's dead !'

The lieutenant deigned not to notice this little speech ; and his friend ran on : 'So is another post-runner—that's the sixth that the man-eater has eaten within the last nine months, according to the general reckoning. And there's a deuce of a difficulty in finding anybody to take his place. So we seem likely to be as newsless as even you could desire in this God-forsaken hole. No letters, no newspapers, no nothing. Meanwhile, Collector Campbell has issued a handbill offering a reward of three thousand rupees to any wight who'll bring him the tiger's skin.'

'Why not?' murmured the lieutenant with knitted brow. 'What does it matter?'

'I'll see if I can't wake him,' muttered Wilford Bosanquet to himself. Then aloud : 'As you seem to think so lightly of the death of nine post-runners, and heaven knows how many harmless natives to boot, what say you to Lucy Campbell's coming marriage?'——

'Lucy's marriage—to *whom?*' broke in Wallace fiercely. 'If to the man of her choice'—— Here he mumbled something which his friend failed to catch. 'But if they're going to force her into wedding old Colonel Graybeard, or that loathsome sneak, Tom Wilson with his five thousand a year, I'll murder 'em both.'

'In for a penny, in for a pound, eh?' quoth Captain Bosanquet. 'Else I might remind you that to slaughter the *one* who wins her would suffice. She can't wed both.—But I thought I'd rouse you. And I've done it. Any one would swear that you are the tiger's kin—his next of kin. Can't you see that I'm joking?'

'Ay, *your* jokes are obvious enough—and always in good taste, I must say,' retorted the love-sick lieutenant.

'Come, old man, don't be riled. You know—at least *I* do—that though Lucy Campbell may be loth to leave her parents in the lurch, and be yours on next-to-nothing a year and hope, she won't be anybody else's, though he had fifty thousand pounds a year. Old Graybeard and Wilson are not the *only* fellows who've tried their luck in that quarter, and found little cause to boast of the upshot, let me tell you.'

This singularly generous confession of defeat—and that from the lips of the heir to forty thousand acres yielding twenty thousand pounds a year—thoroughly restored Wallace to his wonted good-humour, and did something towards dissipating his gloom. But it did nothing to damp his determination to go forth and do battle with the man-eater—a determination which had voiced itself unconsciously to him, and to the sore bewilderment of his friend, in those cross-purpose questions of his, 'Why not?' and 'What does it matter?'

The question now arose, should he go forth alone, or borrow his rich friend's *shikarri*—a word one feels tempted to translate 'gamekeeper.' Only, the game are tigers, and such-like 'fearful wild-fowl ;' and the preserves, the jungle. He resolved to borrow that wily native, whom his friend willingly lent.

'But, old fellow,' he added, 'is it worth while to risk your life for the sake of a paltry three hundred pounds?'

'Oh! I'm not thinking of the gold,' said Wallace. 'But I want to be up doing something, instead of sticking here in the mud.'

'Well, there's a little cash and a good deal of *kudos* in the case. And the man who rid the country of that pest would be a real public benefactor. I've half a mind to go with you, if you'll let me.'

Here Wallace began to hem and haw. And his friend perceiving there was some objection—maybe a disinclination to share the harvest of renown to be reaped by the tiger's destruction—did not press the matter, but promised to send the shikarri, and bade his friend good-morning.

'The fact is,' said Wallace as he followed Bosanquet on to the veranda which belted his modest bungalow, 'my plan hardly admits of a coadjutor, though I may need help in case all goes well.'

'You know best; though your speech is dark to me, I confess. But Murreem Ali will be a far better henchman than I. So ta-ta. Take care of yourself, and God speed you!' So saying, the captain walked away, boding no ill to his friend. For many an officer had been out to shoot the pest, and came home safe and sound without having seen so much as the tip of its tail. The tiger seemed thoroughly well aware of the difference between a poor post-runner armed only with his stick of tinkling bells, and a sportsman armed with a rifle warranted to kill at half a mile.

By the time Murreem Ali joined him, Charlie Wallace had donned a post-runner's red coat, bought for the occasion, and darkened his face to a more than native swarthiness by a liberal outlay of burnt cork. The shikarri, who came armed with a rifle and a pair of pistols, stared to behold the lieutenant in this strange guise; but never a word spoke he except to counsel his temporary master to stick a pair of pistols in his belt. 'Like servant, like Saheeb!' he added with a grin which displayed a highly serviceable set of grinders. 'Baby gun help at a pinch,' he said, 'when big gun bark, no bite.'

To avoid needlessly advertising their intent to all the neighbourhood, they stole out the back way, and reached the high-road through a lonely and roundabout path. For some five miles they jogged on at a good brisk pace till they reached a turn in the road within a stone's throw of the vast jungle haunted by the man-eater. Here the lieutenant begged his attendant to fall behind, lest the beast, seeing two men armed to the teeth, should fight shy of them, as he had of other bold sportsmen. The veteran shikarri shook his head, but held his tongue, knowing that it behoved him to obey orders. His master for the nonce then drew out a bunch of little bells and tied them to the muzzle of his rifle, so as to make it look as like a post-runner's bell-stick as might be. He then hastened forward at a post-runner's jogtrot pace, the bells jingling merrily as he went. His heart meanwhile was none too merry. For though resolved to go through with what he had begun, he could not help reflecting that, if his ruse succeeded, the animal might spring out upon him at any moment from either side of the thick covert that lined his route. However, on he fared without mishap till he reached the very spot where the tiger had pounced on his last victim. This was a gully that crossed the road at right angles, and was now dry as a chip, though a foaming torrent during the rainy season—from mid May till mid August.

As to the identity of the spot he could not doubt it for a moment. For there, cruelly convincing, a few drops of the victim's blood still stained the white pebbles of the gully. And, truth to tell, the sight of them made Charlie Wallace's blood—all young and warm though it was—turn somewhat cold for a moment. Here he halted and looked around him. He saw the flanks of the gully and both sides of the road thickly shagged with brushwood, while the tall forest trees that towered above it quite shut out the rays of the setting sun. Meanwhile, all was still as the grave. And no sign of life could he see. As he stood in that narrow gloomy gorge, he felt as if entombed alive. The stillness awed him. He shifted his rifle. The bells jingled; and ere that sound had fairly died away, another smote his ear—a faint rustling in the brushwood, followed by the crackling of dry leaves and twigs. Quick as lightning, he raised his rifle, and fired it full in the face of the tiger as it balanced itself on the verge of the gully in act to spring. Down it rolled into the bed of the gully, and there lay for a moment as if stunned. But, speedily recovering its feet, it crouched for a second spring; and with one loud, hoarse, grating growl, it came bounding through the air towards its prey, who stood with a pistol in either hand, and fired both point-blank, then fell stricken to the ground—he knew not how.

Not then. No, nor till half an hour afterwards, when he came to himself, and found Murreem Ali stooping over him, pawnee-flask in hand.

'What's become of the tiger?' he gasped as soon as he could command his tongue.

'Devil-tiger, tiger-devil—he lie yonder, Saheeb, dead as door-nail,' answered the shikarri, jerking his thumb over his shoulder.

'Why, the devil, as you call him, must have knocked me down, and then shot clean over me. And then you came up and shot *him?*'

'No me shoot devil. Saheeb shoot devil,' replied the honest shikarri. 'When Murreem Ali came up, he find devil as dead as door-nail. Slug go neat into his right eye, and spirit-devil come out of him through hole.'

'And what's to be done now? For I feel in no plight to trudge back ten miles. Besides, I should like to take the game home with me. Know you of any village near where we could hire a bullock-cart?'

'Sumootra just two mile off, close to road,' replied Ali. 'Find plenty bullock-cart and bullock there. And all for nothing. No rupee. Folk only too glad to do anything for Saheeb who kill the tiger-devil.'

'Then I must ask you to test their goodwill,' replied Charlie Wallace.

The man sped off like a hare with the hounds at its tail. And after the lapse of half an hour, a confused roar as of many voices proclaimed his return with half the village at his heels. While one hoary-headed patriarch fell flat on his belly at the tiger-queller's feet, and worshipped him for slaying the plague of the village, who had swallowed three of his grandsons and others of his more distant kinsfolk, the rest of the villagers crowded round their fallen foe, showering kicks and curses on it before they hoisted the carcass into the cart. Anon, up came the village priest to appease its wandering spirit, and also its protecting deity, Kali, Goddess of Mischief to Mankind. He brought with him for this purpose a pot of red paint, wherewith he smeared the tiger's head and also the barrel of the pistol that laid him low. Other villagers, meanwhile, kept flocking to the scene of action, bringing all sorts of meat and drink offerings to their deliverer—bananas, milk, wild honey, maize-cakes—some of which, especially the bananas and the milk, he found exceedingly grateful to his parched palate. And then, instead of cursing and kicking the tiger, they propped it up in the cart as if it still lived, and decked it with a garland of wild-flowers gathered in the neighbouring jungle, and built over it an arbour of leafy boughs, and greeted it with the music of tomtoms and horns.

Meanwhile, the lieutenant seated himself in the cart—the shikarri by his side—under the shadow, so to speak, of his victim's tail. And then the cart, thus metamorphosed into a kind of triumphal car, moved slowly from the scene of slaughter, headed by the villagers, who marched, or rather danced in front to the sound of horn and tomtom. And though darkness soon overtook them, they were lighted on their journey by more villagers, who joined them with lighted torches in their hands.

Thus conveyed and thus escorted, the hero and idol of the day neared headquarters. He was within a mile of them, when a horseman came galloping across the open fields and overtook the cart. 'What's agate now?' he shouted with a cheery and manly voice, which forthwith prepossessed the lieutenant in his favour. At that moment a second horseman rode up; and after some whispering between them, the first set spurs to his horse and rode rapidly forward. The second stayed and chatted with the lieutenant till the cart drew up in front of his bungalow. There, with a hasty *Au revoir* to its owner, the second horseman took himself off, leaving the lieutenant not a little puzzled as to who these distinguished foreigners—foreign to that station—might be.

Mid the excitement of his tussle with the tiger and the stir and bustle of his triumphant return, Charlie Wallace had clean forgotten the disguise he had donned to lure the tiger from his lair. But the sight of his grimy face in the looking-glass suddenly reminded him how queer a figure he must have cut in the eyes of the inquisitive cavaliers. He had scarcely washed off the war-paint and donned his ordinary 'togs,' when his factotum entered with a note addressed to him in the familiar hand of Collector Campbell, Lucy's father! He tore it open and read, with mingled astonishment and rapture: 'The Governor-general, wishing to thank Lieutenant Wallace for his public service this day done, begs the pleasure of his company at dinner at my table. Eight sharp! Come just as you are—Yours faithfully, HECTOR CAMPBELL.'

'What next?' cried our friend gleefully. But he lacked time for the expression of his feelings. He had barely time to give himself an extra brush-up before presenting himself to those eyes—not Lord Mayo's—which had been his lodestars ever since they first smiled on him.

He reached the door of the roof that sheltered her and the Governor-general just—and only just—in time to save his reputation for punctuality. Naturally, his lordship led the way to the dining-room with Mrs Campbell. As naturally, the aide-de-camp—Mr *Au revoir*—followed with Lucy. Hence Charlie Wallace grumbled not at having to bring up the rear with her father, especially when he found himself seated straight in front of her, with no envious *épergne* to debar him from gazing his fill. The reader may deem it strange that he felt perfectly at ease in the presence of the Governor-general. But the fact is that Lord Mayo was a perfect master of the art—if art it be—of making people feel at home with him. On this occasion he laid himself out, without any show of effort, to draw Charlie out. And he succeeded so thoroughly, that the young man caught himself repeating to his lordship, 'across the walnuts and the wine,' that confoundedly polite form of refusal, 'Sir, I have the honour to inform you, &c.,' which he vowed he had seen so often that he knew it by heart.

Charlie spent a most delightful evening, the more so because Lord Mayo carefully omitted to mar it by formally thanking him for his public services. He was a man who cared more for substance than for form. And so Charlie found next morning when, as he sat at breakfast, his factotum brought him a letter to this effect: 'DEAR SIR—I have the honour to inform you that I have forestalled any request on your part by entering your name on the list of candidates for the vacant post in the Green Cloth Office, where it stands at the head of the list. *All* good luck to you! Yours sincerely, MAYO.'

'What a trump!' cried Charlie in his joy, and was rushing off hatless to Lucy's father's bungalow to pour forth his hearty thanks, when his friend Captain Bosanquet caught him by the coat-tail and asked him, 'Madman, whither away?'

The madman tore himself free at the cost of his coat, and forged ahead, but only to run bolt into the arms of aide-de-camp *Au revoir!* who briefly informed him that Lord Mayo had quitted the bungalow at five A.M., after a cup of black coffee and a hard biscuit, and that he —*Au revoir*—was to rejoin him that evening at the bungalow of Collector Munro, twenty-five miles farther north.

A twelvemonth later, Collector Campbell resigned, and sailed for England with his wife.

But Lucy stayed in India—Lucy still, but Campbell no longer. That name she had swapped for that of Old Scotland's darling hero, of whom she thought highly, and still more highly of ours.

GREAT AUK GOSSIP.

One hundred and eighty guineas realised for a single egg; three hundred and fifty for a stuffed specimen: these are the prices that have to be paid if a museum or an ornithologist would become the proud possessor of an egg and skin of the Great Auk or Garefowl. An announcement of the approaching sale of relics relating to this bird, such as that which recently took place in London, at once creates excitement in the minds of collectors, and, curiously enough, almost equal interest among those who usually care little about objects dear to the hearts of museum curators. Rare as are the remains of the Garefowl—there being, according to Mr Symington Grieve, a leading authority on this subject, fewer than seventy eggs and eighty skins all told—the romantic stories told of finds, lucky bargains, and other Garefowl lore, would fill, nay, have filled volumes. Although £189 seems an absurd sum to give for the egg of even the bird itself, yet in reality, compared with the prices paid by some purchasers of these eggs, the amount would be reckoned an extremely moderate one. For other eggs have often realised very much more than this. Early in 1894 an egg was sold for the unprecedented sum of 300 guineas, undoubtedly a very full price for even a perfect and beautifully marked specimen, though the fact that this egg had been in the possession of Mr Yarrell, the eminent ornithologist, and had a pedigree of almost a century, undoubtedly enhanced its value. This particular egg has an interesting history, Mr Yarrell having acquired it by one of those lucky chances which only occur once in a lifetime. Early in the present century, he happened to be walking on the sands at Boulogne, when he met a fishwoman carrying some seamews' eggs. He followed the woman to her house, and there saw hanging on a string four wild swans' eggs, and with them one of the Great Auk, all of which he purchased for the sum of ten francs. After Mr Yarrell's death in 1856, this egg was sold to Mr Bond for £21. Baron Louis d'Hamonville bought Mr Bond's collection in 1875, and it is a specimen lately the property of this nobleman which has just realised 180 guineas. The egg which brought the splendid price of 300 guineas also came from the same source, but there appears to be a doubt as to which of these two eggs was the one that cost Mr Yarrell two francs. Later in 1894, a perfect egg sold for £273, and a damaged specimen realised as much as £183. Since 1888, the price—but this includes all eggs sold, perfect and imperfect—has varied from £239 to about £280.

It seems strange that America, which only possesses two out of a total of sixty-eight eggs which exist, the remainder being in Europe, should not so far have come to the front, to enrich her museums with a few more of these rare specimens.

It is interesting to trace the rise in value of these eggs during the past thirty years. In 1865 Mr Stevens sold four specimens which fetched an average price of £30, 12s. 6d. each. In 1869 the same firm sold an egg from the collection of Dr Troughton for £64, and in 1895 an egg from the collection of Baron D'Hamonville for £173.

Several of the eggs in the late Mr Champley's collection have an interesting history. The first one he obtained indirectly in 1859 through an inquiry concerning the egg which had belonged to Mr Yarrell. The inquiry was heard of by a dealer in Leipzig, who ultimately sold a beautifully shaped egg to Mr Champley for £18. This egg came originally from Iceland along with six others. Egg No. 3 was decidedly a lucky bargain. While travelling in Italy in 1861, Mr Champley visited the Pavia Museum of Anatomy, and noticed in a glass case several large eggs covered with dust and dirt. He thought that one egg was that of the Great Auk, and, after cleaning the egg, his surmise was found to be correct. This egg was part of a collection one hundred years old. Mr Champley told the chief Director there was among the eggs one of 'Le Grand Penguin,' and offered five napoleons, or an equivalent exchange; money was preferred, and he borrowed the amount from a friend to pay for it. The egg turned out well marked and perfect. Four other eggs in this collection cost £11, 5s. each in 1864; the remainder varying in price from £24 to £30.

Skins of the Great Auk are still more valuable than eggs, but the number of transactions has been very much fewer; in fact, it is believed the last one previous to the sale this year took place in 1869. This had belonged to Dr Troughton, and brought £94, 10s. The Edinburgh Museum had an opportunity of acquiring one in 1870 for £100, but the offer was declined. However, in 1895 a fine specimen was secured for 350 guineas. The Great Auk preserved in the Natural History Museum of Central Park, New York, cost £130 in 1868. Previous to this the value rapidly declines, so to speak, as in 1860 Mr Champley bought a skin and an egg for £45. It is safe to say they would fetch ten times as much now. The skin possessed by Mr Malcolm of Poltalloch, Lochgilphead, N.B., is thought to have cost originally about the year 1840 only two or three pounds. Mr Bullock's Great Auk, sent to him from Papa-Westra, Orkney, was after his death sold in the year 1819 for £15, 5s. 6d., and this although it was a genuine British specimen, and therefore almost if not quite unique in this respect. Yet—and this must close the summary of prices—the value of a skin in 1834 was only about £8—truly, *tempora mutantur.*

In addition to their costliness, the eggs of the Great Auk are extremely interesting on account of their intrinsic beauty. Mr Edward Bidwell has photographed sixty-four out of the sixty-six European specimens, and obtained representations of some of them from several points of view, to better display their peculiar markings. No two of these eggs are exactly alike, and many vary to a remarkable extent, albeit in a less degree than do those of the guillemot. As a rule, the eggs are not unlike in character those of the Razor-bill (*Alca torda*), and are somewhat sparingly spotted with dark-brown blotches in an irregular manner, chiefly at the larger end. A very rare type, an example of which is in the Liverpool Museum, is beautifully streaked all over, there being a very slight tendency to blotching near the larger end. One of the two in the Edinburgh Museum may be called an intermediate type, the other an ordinary type; both are beautiful specimens.

Probably the peculiar fascination the relics of the Garefowl have for the non-scientific mind is sufficiently explained by their great rarity. Charles Kingsley has already told us of that undiscovered islet Allalonestone, where dwells 'the last of the Gairfowl,' dreaming of the past glories of its race! Vain hope! for a hundred years past the Great Auk has been the rarest of rare birds, and during the past fifty, every possible rocky nook has been ransacked to discover, perchance, its skeleton or detached bones. Arctic expeditions, as well as specially equipped scientific ones, while securing remains, have done no more than confirm oral testimony handed down to aged fishermen by their fathers and grandfathers, that while once the Great Auk was very common, since the beginning of the century it has been very scarce. Contrary to generally received opinion, this bird did not reside within the Arctic Circle, nor had it a very circumscribed range. No farther back than the seventeenth century it was plentiful along the Atlantic seaboard from Massachusetts northwards as far as South Greenland, Iceland, and the north-west coasts and islands of Europe. Its abundance in some places can be realised, when we are told that early mariners drove them literally in shoals across sails stretched between their vessels and the shore, and that they were packed and salted like herrings in barrels, forming the principal food of fishermen visiting the banks of Newfoundland. In this way the Great Auk played an important part in encouraging the colonisation of these regions, and in the development of their fisheries.

There is some difference of opinion as to whether the Garefowl was ever abundant around the shores of Britain and the adjacent islands, or whether it should be more correctly described as a visitor. The fact may, however, quite well be that it was only a visitor in more recent historic times after the large colonies of the birds had been immensely reduced in numbers, and still have existed in multitudes in the prehistoric period. This much on the point at least is certain: the quantity of its remains found in the Danish 'kitchen-middens' proves that it formed food for the prehistoric inhabitants, and found in the coast of Denmark a congenial habitat. During Bullock's visit to the Orkneys in 1813, he fruitlessly pursued one of a pair bred in Papa-Westra for hours in a six-oared boat, though it was afterwards shot and sent to him. In 1821 a specimen was captured at St Kilda. Ireland, however, claims one so late as 1834, captured alive in a landing-net off the coast of Waterford.

There is some reason to believe that the last Great Auk in British seas was captured alive, kept a few days, and destroyed for a witch, on the Stack-an-Arnim, Isle of Borera, St Kilda, between the years 1840–1843, by three St Kilda fowlers. This, if an actual fact, would be the final extermination so far as this country is concerned. It seems doubtful whether one of four strange birds shot by Brodtkorb in Norway, in 1848, was really a specimen of the Great Auk or not.

A Garefowl-skerry, famous in its day, was Eldey Island, lying some twenty-five miles to the south-west of Iceland, where, in June 1844, a pair of what are believed to have been the last two Great Auks were killed. These were the descendants of but a scattered remnant that had lingered on, as compared with the hosts that once existed at Funk Island, Newfoundland, which seems to have been a haunt peculiarly suited to their habits and mode of life. What an interesting monograph the missionary who lived in that part of Newfoundland not far from Funk Island in 1818–1823 might have written, had he been an ornithologist, for he saw the bird in considerable numbers, and the boys used to keep them tied by the leg as pets.

Exceedingly quaint and curious are the accounts given by the early voyagers of birds deemed in most instances Garefowl, though nearly always known by the term Penguines; in other instances, some peculiarities are so well defined that there can scarcely be any uncertainty. Doubtless the sea-fowl called by Baron Lahontan the Moyack was none other than the Great Auk. 'The Moyacks,' he says, 'are a sort of a fowl as big as a goose, having a short neck and a broad foot; and, which is very strange, their eggs are half as big again as a swan's, and yet they are all yelk, and that so thick that they must be diluted with water before they can be used as pancakes.' If this last point could be confirmed, it might prove the matter; but it may be feared that it is one of the things we shall never know. Perhaps the earliest mention of the Garefowl is by Hakluyt, who places the date at 1497. It is told of a party of gentlemen on a voyage to Newfoundland in 1536 that 'they came to the island of Penguines . . . whereon they landed, and found it full of great fowles, white and gray, and as big as geese, and they saw infinite number of their eggs.'

Ugly and ungainly as he may appear in the eyes of some, yet the Great Auk with his splendid plumage must have been in life a magnificent sea-fowl. There is something pathetic in the aspect of a bird so powerless to escape from or resist the assaults of man, and whose flesh and eggs afforded such irresistible spoil. Driven to isolated and remote skerries, deprived of the power of flight, a peculiarity only paralleled by the Penguins of the southern seas, laying but one solitary egg in the year, there is little wonder the Garefowl should have rapidly become extinct when once its favourite haunts had been discovered, which, unluckily for it, lay not far removed from teeming fishing-grounds. Yet, although it outlived its epoch, and would be reckoned stupid in comparison with its more alert winged congeners, it need not be commiserated on its inability to fly, for no bird was ever more admirably suited to its environment. Awkward on land, and scarcely able to shuffle along without falling, remove him to his proper sphere, the ocean waste, and what a transformation scene ensues! The language of the poet, 'the oarage of his wings,' acquires a new significance, for these hitherto useless members become powerful paddles, deftly aiding the strokes of his broad-flanged feet to drive him through the surging billows; the strong swimmer laughs at the rising gale, and outrides it in perfect security. It is on record, moreover, that his diving powers were little short of marvellous; small chance, indeed, would any finny denizen of the deep have to escape that arrowy pursuit and elude his powerful beak.

Does the Great Auk connect the present with a distant past when flightless avi-fauna was much more numerous, or does he, on the other hand, represent an aberrant type of bird, an example of degeneration, where the wings have become useless through disuse? There is one authority that could settle such questions beyond appeal, and that is the comparative anatomist; but the data are too scanty even for him to be quite certain. Nature, unfortunately, never repeats her creations—a type once gone is for ever lost. As we have said farewell long ago to the Dodo and the Solitaire, to mention no others, so the Garefowl has gone to join that great band of the creatures that have been; and the best we can now do is to preserve such relics as we have in our museums, making up for their scarcity by such devices as artistically executed casts of their skeletons and eggs.

Hence the recent acquisition of a perfectly preserved specimen of the Great Auk is an achievement of which the authorities of the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art may be justly proud, and one on which they are entitled to great congratulation.

CORDITE AND ITS MANUFACTURE.

Of all the legion of explosive bodies which have been discovered during the present century, there is only one that can in any measure be considered a rival to gunpowder for use in guns, and that one is cordite, our British smokeless powder. The remainder are either too sensitive to allow of safe transport, or are too local in their action; and are entirely unfit to take the place occupied so long by the oldest of all explosives—gunpowder. Assuming, then, that for naval and military purposes a supply of either cordite or gunpowder is indispensable, the question arises—and it is one of considerable importance—Supposing our ports were blockaded for any lengthened period, and our supplies thus cut off, should we be able to maintain the necessary stock of explosives?

At present, we are entirely dependent upon foreign materials for the manufacture of these bodies. Of the ingredients used in making gunpowder—namely, charcoal, sulphur, and nitre (potassium nitrate), the first-named is the only one obtained in this country, both the sulphur and nitre being imported. Similarly in the case of cordite, which is a mixture of gun-cotton, nitro-glycerine, and vaseline, we again rely upon foreign sources for the necessary materials. Thus the nitric acid used in making the nitro-glycerine and gun-cotton is all manufactured from sodium nitrate imported from Chili and Peru; the vaseline is obtained from the United States. It is well worth considering, then, what we should do if thrown by invasion upon our own resources, in order that the requisite substances might be produced in sufficient quantity.

On examining in detail the materials required to manufacture these explosives, it will be found that the chief difficulty would be to obtain a supply of the nitrogen compounds used—nitre in the case of gunpowder, and nitric acid in that of cordite. Taking gunpowder: the charcoal would always be forthcoming; sulphur—of which there are vast quantities locked up in our minerals—could be procured in abundance by resorting to chemical processes. Indeed, at the present time sulphur is one of the most important by-products at all alkali works where the Leblanc method is practised. Great attention has been bestowed upon the recovery of the sulphur from the alkali wastes, with the result that ninety-eight per cent. of the element present in the waste may now be recovered by modern processes. Scarcity of sulphur, therefore, need not be apprehended. But our production of nitre is absolutely nil; and it is to this constituent of gunpowder that attention would have to be devoted.

Coming to cordite, and taking its constituents separately: the gun-cotton is made from cotton waste by the action of nitric acid in the presence of concentrated sulphuric acid. In case of extremity, cotton rags of any description, or even fibres of wood, could be used instead of the cotton waste. The sulphuric acid is made from our own natural productions. The nitric acid—made from foreign sodium nitrate—would be the ingredient for the production of which efforts would have to be directed. So with nitro-glycerine, which is made by acting upon glycerine with nitric acid and strong sulphuric acid. Our soap-works could supply an abundance of glycerine; but we should again be faced with the necessity of making the nitric acid. The third body used in making cordite—namely, vaseline—could be replaced if necessary by some of the heavy oils obtained by distilling coal-tar or shale. So that in the case of our smokeless powder, as in that of gunpowder, the difficulty would be found in obtaining the nitrogen compound.

Even if some of the more feasible of the other explosives known could be pressed into service for use in our ordnance, the same contingency would still confront us, as nitric acid is essential to the manufacture of almost all of these. Thus, picric acid—variously known as melinite, lyddite, &c.—is made by acting upon phenol with nitric acid; nitro-benzene by treating benzene with nitric acid; and so on.

These two nitrogen compounds—nitre and

nitric acid—without which none of our explosives could be made, are easily convertible one into the other. Given either, the second could be readily produced; and if any means were known by which one of them could be obtained, the question would be solved. It would be interesting, therefore, to consider the possible ways by which this end could be secured.

In spite of the advances made in chemical science, we are as yet acquainted with only one process by which nitre may be made directly in useful quantities. It was adopted by the French during the Revolution, when their coasts were blockaded, and their supply of nitre for making powder ran short. No improvement or development has yet been made upon the simple though tedious method then used, which is as follows: Heaps of manure were allowed to rot in the dark for some months, after which the ashes of plants were scattered over the fermented heap, which was moistened occasionally with stable runnings. The white crust which appeared on the mass after a time—consisting chiefly of nitrates of calcium and magnesium—was removed, and boiled with potash lyes, upon which it decomposed, yielding an impure nitre, which was purified by recrystallising. Recently, Pasteur and Warington have investigated the formation of nitrates in manure-heaps, and have found that the nitrogen contained in the organic matter is converted into nitric acid by small organisms. When plant-ashes are placed on the mass, this nitric acid combines with the lime and magnesia present in the ashes, forming their respective nitrates.

This process is still in vogue in some European countries. Thus, in Sweden, where every landed proprietor is compelled to provide annually a quantity of nitre for the Government, this method is the one adopted; and almost all the nitre used in Switzerland is obtained by this means. We should be able, therefore, by a similar mode of procedure, to procure some of the nitre requisite, and from it the nitric acid.

Having regard, however, to the slowness of the method and the greater expenditure of explosives in modern warfare, it is doubtful whether sufficient material could be thus provided; and we should in all probability have to bring in the aid of other processes to serve as auxiliaries to the foregoing. Of these, notwithstanding the fact that the elements contained in nitric acid are present in limitless quantities in air and water, only two have been discovered, and each of these would require considerable development before any appreciable and useful quantity of the necessary nitrogen compounds could be produced by their means. The first of these depends on the fact, that when a hydrogen flame is burnt in a mixture of oxygen and air, some nitric acid is formed during the combustion. If this were performed on a large scale, there is little doubt that considerable quantities of nitric acid could be obtained, and from it the nitre could be made. But at the best, this process is cumbersome and expensive, and the quantity of nitric acid produced is very small in proportion to the amount of hydrogen consumed. It would certainly be the last method resorted to, unless it could be vastly improved. Recently, however, an interesting means of producing nitric acid has been discovered by Crookes. It is undoubtedly capable of great extension, and if properly worked out, would in all probability supersede the present methods for making this acid. Crookes found that when a powerful, rapidly-alternating current of electricity was passed through a Tesla induction coil, the poles of which were placed beyond sparking distance, the air between the poles could be lighted like ordinary coal-gas, clouds of nitric acid vapour being produced by the burning. This discovery is of the greatest importance; and if the process were extended so as to work on a very large scale, there is no reason why a large supply of nitric acid could not be readily and cheaply obtained in this manner.

Such, then, are the methods, at present imperfect, upon which we should be compelled to rely in the event of a sustained invasion of our islands. It is to be hoped that in the near future either they will be made more expeditious, or some better means of producing the requisite nitrogen compounds will be devised, and so furnish these ingredients in such quantity that no drawback could possibly be experienced through lack of explosive materials under any circumstances.

THE DREAMER.

He loves to watch the waves at play
Leap up the rocks with ceaseless roar,
And see their snowy, showering spray
Dissolve in pearls along the shore.

The western sky is dear to him
When rosy day with twilight blends,
And on the ocean's purple rim
The sun, a globe of flame, descends.

The white clouds sailing in the blue,
The white stars peering through the night,
He loves, because they bring to view
The fringes of the infinite.

He hears the music of the skies,
The thunder's bass, the song of birds,
And vainly tries to crystallise
His soul's rich harmonies into words.

And wandering in the Autumn woods,
Far from the sight of human face,
His fancy fills the solitudes
With shapes of beauty and of grace.

What boots his idle dreams to those
Who with unconquerable will
Toil from the dawn till daylight's close
To keep the world from standing still?

He smiles, and says his dreaming tends
To show the beauty of design;
To shape men's lives to nobler ends,
And draw them nearer the Divine.

J. Scott.

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THE MEMORIES OF AN OLD SCOTTISH BURGH.

The success of a Scottish school of fiction which places special emphasis upon 'locality' has naturally led to a revival of interest in the works of John Galt, who was unquestionably the forerunner, if not the master, of that school. And it is impossible to dissociate Galt from his native Irvine, the 'Gudetown' of his own Provost Pawkie, whose Kirkgate—for did there not live in it Miss Mally Glencairn of *The Ayrshire Legatees?*—has been 'likened unto the kingdom of heaven, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage.' Irvine may not commend itself quite so readily to the casual visitor as it did more than three centuries and a half ago to Sir William Brereton, who found it 'daintily situated upon a navigable arm of the sea, and in a dainty, pleasant, level champaign country.' In truth, several chemical works, although they have much to do with the present prosperity of Irvine, have destroyed the sweet savour of this 'champaign country,' and are objected to even by the enthusiastic golfer, who of late years has been greatly in evidence in the neighbourhood of Irvine. The town itself is, however, but little changed since the days of Provost Pawkie and those 'improvements' which he took such pains to chronicle. Although Irvine is now a substantial town of ten thousand inhabitants, there has been less growth in it than in the neighbouring burgh of Ayr, which, owing to its superior attractions and facilities as a seaside resort, will probably at next census be proved to have three times that population.

The memories of Irvine go as far back as the beginning of the thirteenth century, as it received a charter from Alexander II. It played its part also in the War of Independence, although that part was one of humiliation even more than of victory. For, according to the Marquis of Bute, who, after investigation, accepts the old narrative of Hemingford, the 'capitulation of Irvine' was signed in the old burgh—perhaps in what was then the equivalent of the Town Hall—on Sunday, July 7, 1297. Earl Percy had arrived from Ayr with an English army, and encamped in the neighbourhood of the town. Meanwhile, there had been a quarrel in the camp of the Scots between Wallace and the Bruce of the period. As a consequence, Bruce and the other leaders of the aristocratic party joined Percy, and swore fealty to Edward, while Wallace and his sympathisers marched off to the Border region.

Irvine must have backed up King Robert well in his struggle both against the English and the pretensions of the Balliols, for there is still in existence a charter granted to it six years before the battle of Bannockburn. Irvine, like the west of Scotland generally, was a stronghold of the 'Wild West Whigs' as well as of the patriots of the War of Independence. Here lived the Reverend, and in every respect very godly, Robert Blair. Here, in 1640, twelve women were burned for witchcraft. Irvine has also been from a very early period associated with the Montgomerie family, which perhaps reached the height of its reputation in 1839, when thousands of strangers, including that Pretender who subsequently became Napoleon III., came from all parts of the country, and from beyond it, to see, to take part in—and to be damped by—the fêtes of the Eglinton Tournament. There still stand the remains, including a Norman gateway, of Seagate Castle, which is supposed to have been the dower house of the Montgomeries, and to have been built about the middle of the fourteenth century.

The notable memories of Irvine are not much more, however, than a century old, and are associated chiefly with men—and one woman—whose names have not yet been forgotten, and are not likely soon to be, such as Lord-Justice-General Boyle; Eckford, the designer of the American navy; John Galt; James Montgomery;

Robert Burns; and the most extraordinary of all Scottish female fanatics (or impostors), Elspat Simpson, better known as 'Luckie Buchan.' The most in evidence of all the distinguished natives of Irvine is Lord-Justice-General Boyle, who was the senior of Galt by seven years, and the junior of Montgomery by one year, and who survived to 1853. One of the most noticeable features of the town is a statue, by the late Sir John Steell, which was erected to the judge in 1867. Eckford, the designer of the American navy, is mentioned by 'Delta' in his Memoir of Galt as having attended the same school as the biographer of Provost Pawkie. That was doubtless the old grammar-school, which is now in process of demolition. Since Moir wrote, a marble bust of the naval architect has been placed in the Council Chamber. There is also to be seen an excellent portrait of Bailie Fullarton, the original of Provost Pawkie—he was only acting Provost, as Lord Eglinton held the honorary office—who astonished the painter of his (literary) portrait by presenting him with the freedom of the burgh in a very sensible speech. Inquiries made in Irvine do not elicit much about the Eckford family. So far as can be ascertained at this time of day, they lived in the High Street of the burgh, somewhere between the Town House and the shop which was occupied in Burns's time by Templeton, a bookseller, and is now a hair-dresser's establishment. It is possible that Eckford's father, like Galt's, 'followed the sea.'

It is hardly necessary to say that of all the memories which are dear to the people of Irvine, those which centre round the name of Burns are the most important and tenacious. As all the world knows, the poet left Lochlea about midsummer in 1781 to learn the trade of flax-dressing with—so it is believed—one Peacock, who was a relative on the mother's side. The Irvine traditions relating to Burns do not quite fit in with this period of life as it is represented by his biographers, or even in the fullest of his chapters of autobiography—his celebrated letter to Moore. He makes a grave accusation of swindling against his employer—or partner—Peacock, and then he relates the termination of his connection with Irvine thus: 'As we gave a welcome carousal to the New Year, the shop took fire and, burnt to ashes, and I was left, like a true poet, not worth sixpence.' This would seem to indicate that Burns only occupied one flax-dressing or 'heckling' shop in Irvine. The tradition in Irvine, however, is that there were two shops—or, to be more accurate, two rooms—in which Burns did 'heckling,' and that it was the second, in the High Street, that was burnt. Beyond all question, the building which is pointed out as Peacock's shop—a thatched back building of the but-and-ben order, situated in a narrow crooked lane, known as 'The Glasgow Vennel,' that runs east from the High Street, and in Burns's day was the only thoroughfare into the Glasgow Road, is quite intact. In 1850, Mr Hugh Alexander of Broadmead took down in writing the statement made by a John Boyd, then residing in Eglinton Street, Irvine, who affirmed that he had been an eye-witness of the fire, which he said took place in the High Street. Further, in 1859, Colonel Adam Fairlie, of Montreal, a native of Irvine, and then between eighty and ninety years of age, who was present at the Burns Centenary dinner in his native town, stated in the course of a speech that he saw the fire in the poet's 'heckling' shop, which was 'a few doors from the *King's Arms Hotel* in High Street.' The site of what is supposed to be this shop is pointed out, and the assumption is that, when Burns quarrelled with Peacock, he set up for himself in the High Street. It is difficult, if not impossible, however, to reconcile this view of Burns's flax-dressing experiment in Irvine with the account of the abrupt termination of it given by himself in his letter to Moore.

One is on safer ground when dealing with the question of the room that the poet personally occupied in Irvine. There is a tradition that, for a time at any rate, he lived in one of the rooms used by Peacock as a shop, and an inspection of that building suggests the possibility of the north end having been used as a dwelling-house. But it is very generally believed that the poet rented—for a shilling a week—a room in another house on the same side of the Glasgow Vennel, but nearer to the High Street. The initials 'R. B.' are carved in the stone mantel-piece of a kitchen in this tenement, and it is surmised that this carving was done by Burns himself. There is no tradition in Irvine of Burns having had a landlady. He no doubt lived alone, and cooked his own oatmeal porridge. This view is borne out by the postscript to the letter addressed to his father, dated December 27, 1781: 'My meal is nearly out, but I am going to borrow till I get more.'

The Irvine Burns Club preserves with jealous care the manuscripts of *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, *Scotch Drink*, *The Address to the Deil*, *The Twa Dogs*, *The Earnest Cry and Prayer*, and *The Holy Fair*. These are not copies written by the poet, but the originals which were sent to the Kilmarnock Press, and bear the printer's marks. They were presented to the Club by the Rev. Alexander Campbell, the Burgher minister of Irvine, in 1843. Mr Campbell had married the widow of Mr Robinson, a writer in Irvine, who had in his youth been a clerk in the office of Gavin Hamilton, in Mauchline. It may be pretty safely assumed that Burns presented the manuscripts to Gavin Hamilton, and that at his death they fell into the hands of Mr Robinson.

There are few memories of Burns in Irvine. He was known to few people above the rank of Richard Brown, the sailor, who, he says, taught him 'freer' views of life than he had been accustomed to in Lochlea. There is reason to believe, however, that he was not unknown to the then Provost of Irvine, Mr Hamilton. It is generally understood, too, that on his way from his lodging in the Glasgow Vennel to his flax-dressing shop in the High Street, near the *King's Arms Hotel*, he was in the habit of calling at the book-shop—now a hair-dresser's establishment—kept by a Mr

Templeton. In these days, ballads were printed on slips of paper about the length of a newspaper column, and Mr Templeton used to tell how the poet was in the habit of asking him 'if there was anything new in that line.' He often seated himself on the counter, and reaching over, seized the bunch of ballads and read (sometimes aloud) such as struck his fancy.

The names of Richard Brown and David Sillar (who published a volume of poems in 1789, and rose to be a magistrate in Irvine) are those which are most closely associated at once with Burns and with Irvine. Brown seems to have been his most intimate friend while he actually resided in Irvine. He was 'a very noble character, but a helpless son of misfortune.' But 'he spoke of illicit love with the levity of a sailor,' and 'here his friendship did me a mischief.' Yet in the end of 1787 Burns wrote to Brown gratefully recalling a Sunday they had spent in Eglinton woods, and the suggestion of the elder man that certain verses he had heard repeated should be sent to a magazine. 'It was from this remark I derived that idea of my own pieces which encouraged me to endeavour at the character of a poet.' There are no memories of Brown in Irvine. There seems to be little doubt, however, that he is the Richard Brown who appears in the parish register as the son of William Brown and Jane Whinie, and as having been born on the 2d of June 1753. He was thus six years the senior of the poet, who, then only in his twenty-third year, might well respect his friend's 'knowledge of the world.'

Burns had returned to Lochlea from Irvine before the occurrence of the most exciting if not the most extraordinary events that perhaps ever gave variety to the necessarily humdrum life of the old burgh. It was in 1783 that that extraordinary fanatic or swindler—or compound of both—Elspat Simpson or Buchan appeared in the town as the friend and guest of the Rev. Hugh White, minister of the Relief congregation, and that the series of events began which culminated in the deposition of Mr White, the mobbing of 'Luckie' Buchan, and finally the expulsion of herself and her followers, when they, to the number of forty-five, marched by way of Kilmaurs to New Cample, near Closeburn, in Dumfriesshire. But in a letter written to his cousin, James Burness, in August 1784, the poet has given both a most graphic account of the disturbances attending upon the founding, and the expulsion of the Buchanite sect, and an accurate description of their extraordinary creed, and still more extraordinary practices.

Train goes so far as to contend—and in this contention he has recently been supported by the Rev. J. K. Hewison of Rothesay—that the 'darling Jean' of the first *Epistle to Davie* was not Jean Armour, but Jean Gardner, one of the Buchanites and the daughter of a butcher.

Irvine still cherishes the memory of John Galt and James Montgomery: their healths are uniformly drunk at the annual dinners of the Burns Club on the 25th of January. But tradition has not much more to say of Galt—who left Irvine when he was little more than a child—than he himself has given in his Autobiography or embodied in *The Ayrshire Legatees* and *The Provost*. In the Autobiography he tells how—a child of four or so—he enlisted among the followers of 'Luckie' Buchan, and would have left Irvine with her for 'the New Jerusalem,' had not his mother dragged him back! The house on the west side of the High Street in which Galt was born was demolished in the year 1858. The site is now occupied by the Irvine branch of the Union Bank of Scotland. The agent, ex-Provost Paterson, has a photograph of it, which shows it to have been a very commonplace three-storey tenement. The ground-flat in Galt's time had a row of four windows looking to the street, and a close or entry to the extreme left, giving access to a court in the rear. The middle and upper flats had rows of five windows each. The tenant of the ground-flat entered from a door in the close, and the houses up-stairs were reached by a stair at the back. Galt's father, a sea-captain, is supposed to have occupied the middle flat. Above the mantel-piece in the public office of the bank, on a black marble slab, is the inscription: 'On this Site stood the House in which JOHN GALT, Poet and Novelist, was born, 2d May 1779. Rebuilt 1858.'

The old municipal buildings in which Galt received the freedom of the burgh of Irvine from—and to his surprise—his own Provost Pawkie, stood out in the centre of the street not far from where the Town Hall of to-day stands. They were demolished about a quarter of a century ago. Galt, when a boy, may have seen imprisoned debtors letting down their bonnets from the window of the jail by means of long strings, and fishing up the 'heart-easing gill' placed in these receptacles by friends or confederates outside. The appearance of the building at all events must have been quite familiar to young Galt. Since his day, the side of the High Street in which the Town Hall now stands has not been greatly altered. Some stories still linger in Irvine to the credit of Bailie Fullarton, who, as has been seen, was Galt's model for Provost Pawkie. When he had occasion in his magisterial office to lecture the offenders brought before him, he was in the habit of telling them, in reply to promises of amendment, that 'their promises wad fill the chawmer [chamber], but their performances wad a' gang into his snuff-box.' Bailie Fullarton, who appears to have come originally from Rothesay, and spoke with a strong Highland accent, carried on business for a long time as a candle-maker in Irvine. He was in the magistracy off and on for a period of forty years, and died in 1835, at the advanced age of ninety-five. His biographer survived him only four years.

James Montgomery, who was John Galt's senior by eight years, and survived him fifteen, dying in 1854 at the age of eighty-three, was not in the strict sense of the word a native of the burgh of Irvine. He was born in the Half-way of Irvine, the part of the town situated in the parish of Dundonald, on the left bank of the river, and known originally as the village of Fullarton. A shoemaker now plies his trade in the apartment in which Montgomery was born, and which is at once a kitchen and a workshop. A stone in the front building bears the inscription: 'The birthplace of JAMES MONTGOMERY, "the Christian Poet," born 4th November 1771, died 13th April 1854.'

Irvine has been remarkable for its associations with poets and hymn writers, including not only James Montgomery, but also the Rev. David Dickson (1583–1663), covenanting minister of Irvine and author of *O Mother, dear Jerusalem;* Mrs Cousin, author of *The Sands of Time are Sinking;* and the Rev. W. B. Robertson (1820–1886), the poet-preacher and orator of the Trinity United Presbyterian Church in Irvine.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XV.—A DISCOVERY.

THE doctor was at home; had just dined, the servant said. He was having his coffee, and would be glad to see Mr Wynyan, he was sure.

Wynyan was shown in to find the doctor in an easy-chair with his cigar unlit, his coffee untasted. He held out his hand.

'Come and sit down,' he said sadly. 'Glad you've come; I wanted some one to talk to.—Wynyan, these are the times when an old bachelor feels his loneliness, and the want of a true woman who can comfort him.'

Wynyan shook hands warmly, sat down in silence, and refused the cigars offered to him.

'You're like me, Wynyan,' sighed the doctor. 'I can't smoke to-night. I've been having it all over.'

Wynyan looked at him.

'This is one of the times when a thoughtful man takes himself to task. I have lost a patient: could I have done any more and saved him?'

'I think not. I would trust my life in your hands, doctor.'

'Thank you, my lad—thank you; but the feeling will come. It always does at such a time. Have I been guilty of any neglect? Was I ignorant? Ought I to have called in the aid of a specialist? It's terrible work, my dear boy, when one is attacked like this.'

Wynyan looked at him in silence.

'You think me selfish, eh?'

'No, sir; I believe that Mr Dalton was one of your oldest friends, and that you did the best that could be done.'

'Thank you, Wynyan; that does me good. I did: I made a special study of his case. But with a heart like his, nothing was of any use. He and those about him could do more than the doctor. Ah well: he has gone. The world is the worse for its loss, and I can only think of that poor suffering girl.'

'Have—have you seen her to-day, sir?'

'Eh? Oh yes! twice, bless her! Dreadfully cut up, Wynyan, and Miss Bryne too. Nothing but time for them. You have been and seen them, of course?'

'No, sir. I felt that my visit would have been ill-timed.'

'Nonsense, my lad. You shouldn't study etiquette in a trouble like this. It would have been in true sympathy. Ah well, I shall be glad now when it is all over. You will be at the funeral?'

'I shall certainly be there, sir, but not by invitation.'

'What? Nonsense! Of course you will be invited. You will take the head of affairs now.'

Wynyan shook his head; and then told all that had passed.

'The scoundrel!' cried the doctor. 'But you are never going to put up with that, boy. You shouldn't have taken the money.'

'I did not,' said Wynyan quietly.

'Oh come: that's something.—But what a scamp! He killed the old man over a quarrel; there's no doubt about that. I saw old Hamber, and he told me that they had been having words. But he mustn't have matters all his own way. I hear that there is no will, no trustees, no nothing. How can men be so reckless over their affairs? If Dalton had put down in black and white what he meant to be done after his death, how simple and sure everything would have been!'

'Yes, doctor,' said Wynyan drily. 'You have made your will, I suppose?'

'Eh? I? Well, no: not yet. But this is a lesson to me. I'll get it done at once.—And so Brant has regularly turned you out of the business?'

'Exactly, as if I had been some boy clerk with ten shillings a week,' replied Wynyan.

'A scoundrel!—There, I tell you what you shall do, my boy. You shall start an opposition business on your own account, and get all the work away. I'll lend you a few thousands. Hang it! I'll find the money, and come in as sleeping partner. That would floor the rascal.—No; that wouldn't do, though; we should be ruining poor little Rénée, eh?'

'Yes,' said Wynyan, smiling.—'That would not do, doctor.'

'No; but we'll checkmate him somehow.—Do light up, my dear boy. I feel as if I could manage my cigar now. Let's have a quiet talk over affairs. I can't advise you; but I should say that this is one of the difficulties which will settle themselves. We must wait. Perhaps Rénée or her aunt may find some papers yet. We shall see.'

They sat on, talking over the incidents of the last day or two, till Wynyan rose.

'Going, my boy? Ah well, I won't ask you to stay later. A good night's rest will do us both good.—By the way, I don't quite know where you live. Blaine's Inn, isn't it?'

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'No, sir. Number 9 St Chrysos' Inn.'

'Give me your card. I might want to write to you.'

Wynyan's hand went to his breast-pocket, was thrust in and snatched away, and let fall, as a peculiar thrill ran through him.

'Hullo!' cried the doctor. 'Misfortunes never come singly. Hang it, man, don't say you've lost your pocket-book.'

'No—no,' said Wynyan hurriedly; 'but I have no card. I'll send you my address.—Good-night, sir.'

'But stop a minute. Anything the matter?'

'Yes—no. Don't ask me now, sir. I'm a good deal upset with all this trouble.—Good-night, sir.'

He wrung the doctor's hand, and hurried away, leaving Kilpatrick wondering.

'There's something wrong,' he said, as he heard the door close and his visitor's hurried step. 'He must have lost something. Might as well have said. Poor fellow! he looked ghastly.'

The doctor was quite right; and if he had seen Wynyan's face as he passed the next lamp, he would have concluded to follow him, feeling that medical advice was needed. It was ashy, and the big drops of perspiration stood upon his brow. He was trembling, too, with excitement as he hurried along, holding his hand pressed against his breast.

Signalling to the first cab he saw, he was driven to St Chrysos', where he leaped out, and was rushing in by the narrow gateway, when a shout recalled him to himself.

'Don't do that, sir,' yelled the cabman.

'I beg your pardon, my man,' cried Wynyan hurriedly, as he went back and paid him. 'I'm ill—not myself.'

'Shall I drive round, and find a doctor, sir?' said the man eagerly; but Wynyan did not hear him. He staggered rather than walked through the gateway and across the square to his own staircase, still with one hand pressed to his breast, as if suffering from a wound, till he had to lower it, get out his latchkey, and enter his rooms.

His hands trembled so that he could scarcely get out a match to light the gas; and this done, he looked wildly round, as if to see that he was alone before he thrust his hand into his breast and drew out, neatly folded in its creases, and forming a packet about the size of a fairly large pocket-book, the plans and drawings of his invention, just as he had taken them from the dying man's hands, and thrust them hurriedly into his breast-pocket till he could get the key of the safe and place them in their own drawer.

CHAPTER XVI.—IN TEMPTATION.

Wynyan stood folding and unfolding the drawings for some moments beneath the gas globe, looking dazed and strange from the bewildering crowd of thoughts which swept through his brain.

These drawings—come back in so strange a way to his hands from his partner in the invention, he, dying, placing them as it were in the charge of him who had morally a full right to participate in all that the invention produced. And now, after the brutal dismissal he had suffered at the hands of Brant Dalton, completely thrown over, almost without acknowledgment of his services, he found himself standing there holding in his hand the proof that the man who had made himself his enemy was literally hoist with his own petard. The valuable invention, his idea originally, had come back to him at this strange turn of Fortune's wheel. Dalton, the only other being who fully understood it, had left him possessing the legacy of knowledge; and he had but to hold fast by it, prove to the Government that he alone held the original drawings, and claim and receive all future rewards.

Brant knew nothing. He might have heard some rumours of an invention on the way; so had Hamber some idea. But it was a private matter between him and Dalton, and he alone possessed the secret of the construction. Who could hinder him from inheriting everything it produced; and instead of being terribly checked, if not quite ruined by Brant's blow, he now stood there wealthy beyond his wildest hopes, ready to receive royalties that might be without limit, and for what? The work of his own brain.

Wynyan carefully folded and smoothed the plans, gazing at the neat little packet with the light of triumph in his eyes; and a peculiar smile came upon his lips as he stood in imagination once more before Brant Dalton, listening to his words culminating in his curt, insolent dismissal.

'He has thrown me over when I would have worked honestly with him, perfectly content with my share. Dalton would not have let him have a penny if he could have lived and seen how he behaved; it was from his failing hands I took the drawings—our drawings then—mine now; and there is nothing to hinder me—no writing—no agreement upon which to base a claim. No documentary evidence save Dalton's agreement with the Government for others to base their right to share. Let him dispute it if ever he knows. I can prove to the Government that it is my invention, and without these drawings it is useless, for the plans the Government hold have still the fatal blemish. They are useless unless I amend them and make them like to these.'

He uttered a low harsh laugh, and hurriedly buttoned the papers in his breast once more.

'Strange!' he went on, 'that I should not have found the matter out before. No: not strange. I have had so much to think of, and I have never wanted my pocket-book till I was going to give Kilpatrick a card. It is all fate—fate, and he is justly punished for his cowardly treatment. The plans are mine—mine—the children of my brain. Who will dare to claim them now?'

For a time he repented that he had not made sure of having them in his possession when his hand touched something at the doctor's. He felt that Kilpatrick would have rejoiced with him, and told him to hold on to that which had accidentally come into his possession, but he came back to his old way of thinking—that he had something there which was for himself alone—something to examine and think over with no one near.

The feeling of triumph over his enemy mastered every other thought, and there were moments when he longed to contrive that in some way Brant should learn of the way in which he had fought against himself; but this was soon dismissed.

'Let him see it in my prosperity,' he said to himself. 'The knowledge will come in good time. I could not have a more complete revenge, even if I wished.'

Then he sat and thought of the long weary days and nights he had spent over that invention, and how during the past day or so his loss had not fully come home to him. Now he knew that it would have been heart-breaking, and how bitterly he would have felt the injury when Brant had gone on triumphing—rising as it were to success over the man whom he had trampled down.

'It would have been maddening,' he said to himself. 'I could not have borne it.' He would have been master in every way, while now there was nothing to prevent—some time in the future when her grief was becoming less poignant—his approaching Rénée, telling her of his love, of how her father had intended to make him partner as well as friend, and asking her to be his wife.

He started from his chair with the great drops standing upon his brow, and a look of horror in his eyes, for, as if a stern voice had spoken the words in his ear, conscience whispered: 'When you have prospered by your dishonour! Are those plans really yours?'

For hours that night, with brain excited almost to madness, he fought that thought with shift, evasion, and excuse—the evil of his nature contending with the better part. The temptation was horrible. They were his. It could not be robbing Dalton's heirs. How could he rob Rénée, when he was ready to work for her, to be her slave in his desire to make her happy, her life one long dream of peace and joy? He would only be taking his own—keeping his own, which had almost been placed in his hands by her father to hold in trust for her. Theft? embezzlement? The idea was absurd, and he told himself that he would be the veriest idiot to cast from him his rights, and place them in his enemy's hand, for Brant to make a mock of him for his weak, sensitive ideas of honour.

Over and over again he fought the battle, till the dawn found him feverish and utterly exhausted as he lay back in his chair gazing outward through the window to where the soft orange flecks proclaimed the coming of another day's sun.

The fight was over, and he lay back there worn out with the struggle, but ready to cry aloud:

'Thank God! I have won. For your sake, dearest. I could not have looked you in the eyes again.'

The next minute, he was tying up the plans, and sealing the knot, before carefully securing them in a large envelope, which he also sealed and then buttoned up tightly in his breast, after which he sank back with the fever passing away, to leave him sleeping peacefully as a child.

LONDON'S WATER-SUPPLY.

It is hardly necessary to insist on the difficulty of supplying to the enormous population of London an adequate service of pure water. The duty is one which the County Council, in emulation of the smaller but more advanced corporations in England and Scotland, is anxious to bear on its own shoulders. But at present it devolves upon eight companies, all of which have a curious and varied history. If we glance at the small beginnings of this phase of municipal work, we will be the better able to appreciate the astonishing dimensions of the present system of supply. Once, of course, there was no organised supply. A few wells in convenient places, aided by the brooks which ran into the Thames, and have long since been filled up, gave the early citizens all the water they required. By-and-by it became necessary to bring water from the Tybourne near Hampstead, in conduits, and it is said that the points at which these conduits discharged their burdens into little reservoirs are still indicated in street names, Lamb's Conduit Street being an instance. Then in 1557 a Dutchman named Morrys received permission to build a water-wheel in one of the arches of the old London Bridge, and there for a great many years the water of the Thames, purer then than now, was raised for the city.

Not till half a century after was the first step taken towards a water-service on the present lines. To Sir Hugh Myddelton, a goldsmith in the city of London, the honour of the new service is due. James I. of England gave the Lord Mayor of London permission to tap the springs of Hertfordshire for his city's service; but the Corporation showed no zeal in the matter, and Sir Hugh, as a volunteer or 'adventurer,' laid the foundation of the New River Company, which exists to this day, and an 'adventurer's' share in which is a rich prize indeed. Some years were spent in making the aqueduct or 'new river' to bring the waters of the Chadwell and Amwell springs to Islington; but in 1613 the water was permitted to enter the reservoirs in London, and some curious prints still commemorate the scene of festivity which attended the remarkable event. The river then was thirty-eight miles long; but it has since been shortened to twenty-eight, and the company has opened out many new sources of supply, both in chalk wells, and by taking water from the river Lea.

This was the first of the great water companies of London. Not till the next century did the Chelsea Company appear. Both these systems supplied water through wooden pipes, chiefly of elm; and in districts where pipes were not laid, the water was sold from barrels driven about on wheels. The Chelsea Company took its water from ponds in St James's Park for many years; and when the demand increased, it transferred its attentions to the

Thames. Filtration there was none; and not till 1829 was science so far advanced that the water was set to stand for a few hours to allow the dirt in it to subside. The Grand Junction Company was, however, in its original source of supply even less particular; for it actually drew its water from the Grand Junction Canal. If that eminently useful waterway was in anything like its present state then, the taste of the people in the company's district must have been very accommodating. The Grand Junction was set down in Paddington, and when it was driven by circumstances to abandon the canal, it went to Chelsea, and took the water of the river instead. This represented an improvement in quality, no doubt, for the Thames then was a tolerably pure stream; but its purity was the victim of a gradual decadence, which in time dislocated the arrangements of all the companies on its banks. The near neighbour of the Grand Junction and the Chelsea Companies is the West Middlesex, which was a very small affair at first. These three undertakings now supply the most fashionable quarters of London, all the large clubs and hotels, and the great houses.

The south side of the river has three companies for its supply, but one of them does not trouble the Thames at all. The Lambeth Company has always tapped the Thames. With a twenty horse-power engine it used to draw the water from a point near the present Charing Cross Railway Bridge, and pump it straight into the cisterns of the customers. By-and-by it substituted cast-iron pipes for wooden ones, through which the water used to leak; and gradually its area and its supply grew till it became a vast undertaking. The Southwark and Vauxhall Company, its immediate neighbour, did not at first aspire to the Thames. True, it is a descendant of old Morrys's Water-wheel system at London Bridge, but the first actual source of the supply was a brook which used to run through Brixton to the Thames. It was called Vauxhall Creek, and became so fetid by-and-by that the company was compelled to go to the greater river, and made a tunnel three feet six inches in diameter to take the water from the Thames. The Kent Company, however, depends entirely on wells. The discovery of this supply was a mere accident, for the company, which serves the greater part of South-east London, used to draw the Raven's Burn water; and it was only because the well-water rushed into the foundations of a new engine-house that the existence of a vast store of pure water in the chalk formation, ready for immediate distribution, was suspected. Ever since then, the residents in this district have enjoyed a cold, clear well-water, drawn from a depth of two hundred feet, and so pure that any attempt to filter it would be superfluous. Its temperature hardly ever varies; and the supply is so inexhaustible that no system of storage reservoirs is necessary.

Lastly, we come to the East London Company, which has the most onerous duty and the greatest demand to meet of all the eight organisations. It has three sources of supply—the Thames, the Lea, and the chalk springs; the Thames being the least important. For two hundred years the companies which are now merged in the East London served the east end; and the enormous extension of that part of the metropolis has made the company the most important, though not the most wealthy of the eight. It has enormous storing capacity now, its reservoirs at Walthamstow holding eight hundred millions of gallons and covering nearly two hundred and forty acres. Even this vast flood, however, would only be enough to supply the whole of London for about four days. When the cholera epidemics of the middle of the century threw suspicion on the Thames as a source of drinking-water, Parliament compelled all the river companies to remove their intakes above the tidal portion of the stream; and at Hampton, Surbiton, and Molesey there are now the inlets of six companies, and their storing and filtering beds and pumping works are conspicuous features of the riverside scene.

The whole of Greater London, covering an area of about six hundred and thirty miles, is supplied by these organisations, whose powers and districts are defined by law. The six Thames companies are allowed to draw a maximum supply of 120 million gallons a day; the East London is allowed to take 33 million gallons, and the New River 22½ million gallons a day from the Lea; the rest comes from the chalk wells; there is also, however, a supplementary supply drawn by several companies from the gravel beds by the side of the Thames, and in time of flood or drought this natural store is very useful. In March last year, 180 millions of gallons of filtered water were required every day for the supply of London, which gave an average of about thirty-three gallons to each person in the area of supply, for drinking, domestic, and trade purposes. But in March last the consumption had increased so greatly that the daily total was 220 million gallons, or 40 gallons per head. Every drop of the water has been carefully purified, with the exception of that from the wells. For this purpose, the companies have 114 filter beds, covering 117¼ acres. Every company, except the Kent, has storage reservoirs, in which water is kept in readiness for emergencies. There are storage reservoirs for unfiltered water, covering 474½ acres, and holding about 1280 millions of gallons, and sixty filtered water reservoirs holding 217 millions of gallons. That is to say, if every source of supply were cut off, London would have enough water in store for a little more than a week. The pumping operations represent an enormous expenditure of force. The Southwark Company, for instance, pumps a dozen million gallons every day a distance of eighteen miles to Nunhead, with a rise of 215 feet, for distribution thence to the other parts of the district. The pipes, too, are often enormous in size, some of the tunnels being nine feet in diameter. As for the length, there are in all London 5000 miles of water-pipes, on which there are some 27,625 hydrants. It is hard to gain from mere figures an adequate conception of the extent of London's water-supply, but the enormous stream of water flows steadily into the houses—over 800,000 of them—day after day, carefully filtered and purified; and the system contrasts curiously with the old New River water-carts and Chelsea's wooden pipes.

But London grows so rapidly that the minds of experts are filled with anxiety as to the provision which must be made for the future. The Commission which investigated this matter some time ago came to the conclusion that there is no reason for concern, and that no danger of famine is imminent. On the present rate of increase it is estimated that in 1931 London will have a population of eleven millions, requiring 415 million gallons of water a day as a maximum supply. This is at the rate of nearly thirty-eight gallons a head, which is far above the present yearly average; but even with such a supply, the Commission thinks there is, for forty years ahead at least, ample margin in the present sources. By increasing the Thames supply to a maximum of 300 million gallons a day, maintaining the Lea supply at its present figure, and taking 67,500,000 gallons from the chalk wells in Hertfordshire and Kent, a supply of 420 million gallons a day can be had, which at the present rate of consumption would be enough for thirteen millions of people, and at the more liberal rate allowed by the Commissioners enough and to spare for the population which London is then expected to have. Storage reservoirs in the Thames valley, and further tapping of the chalk area east of the Kent Company's district, are among the suggested measures; and as the Commissioners are perfectly satisfied that the river waters, when properly filtered, are quite safe and wholesome, they make out a fair case for adhesion to existing sources. Those who look beyond 1931 may have qualms as to the continual sufficiency of the supply; but the facts we have already considered are astonishing enough, and to go further into the area of thousands of millions would only produce bewilderment. We had better leave the mighty water-supply of London where it is.

THE HOME CIVIL SERVICE.

The selecting of candidates for vacant posts in all branches of the Civil Service occupies the time of an entire Government department—that of the Civil Service Commission—which costs over forty thousand pounds a year. On an average, thirty thousand candidates are examined yearly, for no one can enter the portals of the service without undergoing some sort of literary test, though it should be merely in reading and writing. Thus the examiners have frequently to devote their time to ascertaining the elementary acquirements of housekeepers, matrons, porters, and messengers who have obtained their appointments by favour, as well as to measuring the particular knowledge possessed by surveyors, geologists, and chemists. Apart from such special work, there remains the examining, at more or less regular intervals, of aspirants for clerkships, Excise and Customs officerships, sorters in the Post-office, and telegraphists.

Posts in the Civil Service are very rightly looked upon by hosts of the rising youth of the country as very desirable situations. The work is, as a rule, easy, the pay is fairly good and regularly increasing, promotion is certain, and old age is provided for by a liberal pension. A person who has served forty years can retire upon two-thirds of his final salary. The rule is: 'Multiply salary on retiring by number of years of service and divide by sixty.' Naturally, however, this rule is not inflexible.

Among the best paid appointments in the Home Service are those of clerkships in the 'New Higher Division.' Competition for these is not very keen—about four candidates for each vacancy—and examinations are held at irregular intervals. The limits of age are twenty-two and twenty-four, and a fee of six pounds is charged for examination, which embraces a very wide range of subjects. Among these may be mentioned the language, literature, and history of England, Greece, Rome, France, Germany, and Italy; pure and mixed mathematics, natural and moral science, jurisprudence, and political economy. Candidates are at liberty to take up any or all of these subjects, and it may be mentioned that the majority of the successful competitors are usually university graduates in honours. Although the examinations are difficult, the prospects are very good. The salary commences at one hundred pounds, and rises by twelve pounds ten shillings annually to four hundred pounds, thence by twenty pounds to a maximum of six hundred pounds; while many superior posts, with salaries ranging from six hundred pounds to one thousand pounds, are filled from this branch.

Coming now to consider those situations which attract the largest number of candidates, we find that competitions for such take place, as a rule, twice annually. These competitions have been held from time to time since 1870, and in some cases before that year; but although examinations for any appointment be held at corresponding dates in successive years, the Commissioners ask that it be not assumed that they will continue to be so held in the future, as they only take place when it becomes necessary to provide for vacancies. However, a pretty accurate estimate of probable dates may be made by watching the appointments as they occur, and thus arriving at the number who still remain to be appointed from the successful lists of previous examinations. The competitions are held 'with reference to the vacancies existing at the time, or to the number which may be estimated to occur within any period not exceeding six months' from their announcement. The notices of the dates and number of vacancies to be filled are made in some of the principal London and provincial newspapers, those in the London dailies usually appearing on Thursdays.

Regarding books for study, or the course of preparation candidates should follow, the Commissioners give no information apart from what may be gathered from the examination papers and table of marks published on the result of each competition.

Female employments may be divided into three distinct branches—those of sorters in the post-office, and of telegraphists and clerkships. The subjects of examination and limits of age for sorters and telegraphists are similar. Candidates must not be less than fifteen years of age, nor more than eighteen, and must be unmarried or widows! A note to the regulations states that they will be required to resign their appointments on marriage. The subjects of examination are: Handwriting, orthography, English composition (to be tested by a short essay or letter on a simple subject), arithmetic (including vulgar and decimal fractions and percentages), and general geography. It may be said that competition is very keen; an average of eighty-five over the entire examination being quite a usual percentage for a successful candidate to make. There are anywhere from ten to thirty candidates forward for each vacancy advertised. Successful students who are to be telegraphists require to undergo a course of instruction in telegraphy, for which no charge is made; but they receive no pay while under instruction. The course extends usually over a period of three months, and when they pass successfully through the school, they receive ten shillings a week for the first year, twelve shillings during the second, and fifteen shillings for the third. Their salary thence rises by one shilling and sixpence annually to twenty-eight shillings a week, and further promotion depends on merit. The salary of sorters commences at twelve shillings a week, and rises one shilling annually to twenty-one shillings and sixpence. Candidates for this situation must not be under four feet ten inches in height.

The tests set to female clerks are much more formidable; and indeed a long course of careful preparation is necessary before any one can hope to be successful. The subjects are the same as for sorters, only they are much more advanced in nature, and include history. The arithmetic papers set are fairly difficult, and the geography and history questions asked are very searching. Above all—and this is the weak point with most—an essay 'of not less than two foolscap pages' has to be written on one of three given subjects, 'with special attention to grammatical accuracy.' The limits of age are eighteen and twenty, and the commencing salary is sixty-five pounds. This increases by three pounds per annum to one hundred pounds, with good prospects of promotion to higher grades. They are required to attend seven hours daily, and are employed either in the Receiver and Accountant-general's office, or in the savings-bank department of the General Post-office.

The examinations for sorters and telegraphists are held mostly in London, very rarely also in Edinburgh and Dublin. Those for female clerks are regularly held at ten centres.

The limits of age for male sorters are eighteen and twenty-one; for male telegraphists, fourteen and eighteen. The examination for the latter is exactly similar to that for female telegraphists; that for sorters differs only in respect to the paper set in arithmetic, which includes only the first four rules, simple and compound. The examination fee for all sorters' and telegraphists' examinations is two shillings and sixpence. The wages of male sorters begins at eighteen shillings a week, and rises annually one shilling to twenty shillings, thence by annual increments of two shillings a week to forty shillings. The hours of attendance are eight daily, and are generally divided into two periods of duty, one in the very early hours of the morning, and the other in the evening.

Male telegraphists, after passing through the school of telegraphy, receive twelve shillings a week for the first year, fourteen shillings for the second, and eighteen shillings for the third. Thence their weekly salary increases by two shillings a week annually to forty shillings. These, as well as the female staff, must hold themselves ready for Sunday duty. All sorters and telegraphists have to serve two years on probation.

The competitions for boy and men clerkships are, as a rule, very well attended. Boy clerks must not be less than fifteen years of age, nor more than seventeen; the limits for men clerks, or, as this branch of the service is officially known, the Second Division, are seventeen and twenty. It may be mentioned here that the age limit is reckoned up to the 'first day of the examination,' so that a candidate turned seventeen on, say, the 3d of June could sit an examination beginning on the 4th, while another may present himself whose twentieth birthday might fall on the 5th, even supposing the examination to last till the 8th. The examination tests include in the case of boy clerks an exercise in copying MS. (to test accuracy); that for Second Division also includes the above, with the addition of indexing or docketing official letters, digesting returns into summaries, English history, and book-keeping. Boy candidates require to pay a fee of ten shillings, men clerks a fee of two pounds.

The Second Division examination is really the stiffest that is held in the lower branches of the service. Although many of the tests given are purely a question of mechanical accuracy, the papers set in history, geography, arithmetic, composition, and book-keeping are in reality very searching.

Boy-clerk candidates are examined at seven centres, those for Second Division at fourteen. Very few of the former get work out of London. There are a very limited number in Edinburgh and a few in Dublin, but vacancies in either of these places are extremely rare. On the other hand, men clerks are required to serve 'in any department of the State (at home or abroad) to which they may be called.'

At each open competition for men clerkships, one-fourth the number of vacancies is reserved for boy clerks, who compete among themselves for the places. Those entering the service as 'boys' remain boys until they attain the age of twenty, when they are struck off the list unless they have been successful in obtaining a Second Division clerkship in either the limited or open competition.

The pay of boy clerks begins at fourteen shillings a week, and rises one shilling weekly per annum as long as they are in the service. Men clerks receive a commencing salary of seventy pounds per annum, which rises five pounds yearly to one hundred pounds, thence by seven pounds ten shillings to one hundred and ninety pounds, and then by ten pounds to three hundred and fifty pounds. The prospects of promotion are very good.

One of the most popular branches of the service is the Excise. Candidates for this appointment are required to pass an examination in handwriting, English composition and orthography, geography, and higher arithmetic, including mensuration. The limits of age are nineteen and twenty-two, and candidates must be unmarried. Evidently the Civil Service Commissioners are determined not to allow into the service persons already burdened with the cares of housekeeping. This is especially wise in view of the small initial salary paid in most cases. Assistants of Excise receive fifty pounds per annum, which rises five pounds yearly to eighty pounds, thence by various increments to four hundred pounds. Second-class officers receive two shillings per diem when actively employed, so that the initial salary in most cases is over eighty pounds. The examination fee is one pound, and there are in all twenty centres where competitions are held.

The regulations for Customs candidates, after going through many changes from time to time, may now be regarded as practically settled. The limits of age are eighteen and twenty-one, and the subjects of examination are similar to those for the Excise service. The examination fee is fifteen shillings, and competitions are held at eighteen centres. The salary commences at fifty-five pounds per annum, and rises by annual increments of three pounds to eighty pounds, thence from eighty-five pounds by similar increments to one hundred pounds. Prospects of promotion are very good, officers of the first class of approved character being eligible for the second class of examining officers, subject to a test examination in practical departmental business.

In regard to the age limit for all examinations, there are many exceptions, which need not be given in full. It may be stated that persons in the Civil Service can only attend any other examination conducted by the Commissioners on producing the written permission of the authorities of their department. Those who have been not less than two years in the Civil Service may deduct from their actual age any time, not exceeding five years, which they may have spent in such service.

It is not the practice of the Commissioners to test beforehand the question of physical qualifications. This is done after the candidate has been successful in the literary part of the examination. Except for Customs, a slight degree of ordinary short-sight is not a disqualification. Permanent deafness, loss of an arm, leg, or hand, and considerable lameness, are disqualifications. Delicacy of constitution, though positive disease is absent, may lead to rejection, and, especially for the post-office, want of general vigour may disqualify. In regard to holidays, the annual leave of absence varies from three to six weeks according to the department, and, of course, according also to the status of the servant.

THE BOMBARDIER.

CHAPTER III.

Despite Sergeant Quackenbush's good intentions, Bombardier Shewell's enmity increased. The opinion of the village was divided. There was a shrillness to the vanity of the soldier of artillery, which, vexing those about him, would have touched them a little too, if they could have seen how sore was the heart behind it. The curate, hoping that the association would bring about peace, influenced members of the congregation to elect the sergeant as the Bombardier's fellow-sidesman at the annual vestry meeting. After events did not fulfil the curate's hopes. When it chanced, of a Sunday, that the churchwardens were not present, the sidesmen collected the offertory, and the two soldiers then performed the duty. The curate found the occasions a combination of chastened humour and uneasiness. At the words 'Let your light so shine before men,' &c., the two soldiers, rising abruptly from their front seats, and, looking askance at each other, would begin their task, working towards the farther end of the church. He who finished first waited for the other: if the sergeant, with soldierly exactness of position, and face good-humouredly set in the sacred line of duty; if the Bombardier, with elevated head, lips protruding, and a fine disregard of the sergeant's labours. When the task of both was ended, and they were ready to march to the chancel, they stepped forward, looking over each other's heads the while. Then, at proper distance, they paused, made a right and left turn respectively, fell into line, shoulder to shoulder, and marched erect and grim to the altar rails. The offertory being delivered, they paused again, and the former evolutions were repeated as they returned to their seats, never having directly looked at each other. Even Sophie Warner felt a thrill of fear at times lest the Bombardier should suddenly revolt. If the two chanced to meet in the vestry, and it was necessary to speak, they did so, looking at the buttons on each other's coats only: if they met in the street, they saluted stiffly, without looking at all.

One day there appeared a notice in the county paper, to the effect that Sergeant Quackenbush had been made a Justice of the Peace. For years this honour had been Bombardier Shewell's ambition. 'And now,' as he said with sharp-set anger—'now to be forestalled by a beggarly sergeant of the Line, by a hero of Gatling guns and feather-stuffed palliasses!'

It was the sergeant's offending developed to the *n*th degree; it was giving the children's bread to the dogs. One or two good citizens tried to show him that his financial qualifications were not sufficient—the sergeant had bought real estate along the line of the Silver Valley Railway—that he was old, and that, in any case, the respect in which the people held him could not be increased by any such honour. They forebore to tell that his irascible and self-satisfied spirit, his conspicuous prejudices and heroical ideas of justice, were hardly adapted to the magisterial bench; that he would be too much inclined to administer law after the rigid procedure of a court-martial. It was in vain: the injury was done; and the nitric breath of the Bombardier's indignation was only being held for a chance to blow the sergeant from his perch.

It was apparent to the village, as to Sophie Warner and Keble Graves, that a climax must come soon. Something must break—either the Bombardier's high temper, or the sticks of the two soldiers on each other's heads. One day there appeared in the county paper the following letter:

'A SHOT IN THE OPEN.

'To the Editor of the *Clarion*.

'SIR—I desire to say, that in my opinion—an opinion matured by seventy-five years' knowledge of the world, and study of political and historical conditions in many countries—the present Government has abandoned its forts and hauled down its flag. To fill public offices with fit and proper men is the proud right of a Government; but, sir, the late appointments to Commissions of the Peace—*and one in particular!*—prove the present Ministry unworthy of confidence. I worked for the election of the member for this district, but now, sir, I draw the caustic pencil across the countenance of political iniquity. Strangers are set to rule over us. I demand to know, without ambush or subterfuge, whether henceforth the sentinels of the Law are to be ignorant and boastful, and if our magisterial bench is to be the refuge of the irresponsible new-comer, and, it may be—I do not assert it—it may be, the adventurer! But let faithless Governments and their satellites beware! The wicked shall be put to flight, and the righteous shall dwell in their tents. —I have the honour to be, sir, obediently yours,

MATTHEW SHEWELL, Bombardier.'

This letter produced a sensation; faction feeling ran high. It divided political parties. It split the Methodist body; it drew the attention of the red-shirted river-men, who were running a late drive of logs down the Cascarada; it roused the sergeant to antipathy—he had hitherto only been on the sturdy defensive. Sectarianism, temperance, politics, personal and moral exasperation were all at work. The following week this reply to the Bombardier appeared:

'LITTLE RAPIDS, *June* 24, 1888.

'To the Editor of the *Clarion*.

'SIR—Matthew Shewell (Bombardier), the same, as he has informed us, having been "with Raglan at the Alma," has come out with a blustering muzzle-loader to dismount a battery of Armstrong guns. Sir, I have the honour to be one of the late appointments to the Commission of the Peace. If not to know *patois* French is ignorant, I am ignorant; if to carry a medal "for gallant service on the field of battle" is boastful, I am boastful, the like being mine—and there you are! I am a new-comer to this district, but as to being an adventurer, my record gives that taunt the lie. Were I not bound by my position, and my assailant not an old man—but I will not proceed. The public will understand me; and while I blush for a fellow-citizen, a fellow-churchman, and a fellow-soldier, I have the honour to subscribe myself, sir, respectfully yours,

BRIGG QUACKENBUSH, J.P., Sergeant.'

The day following the appearance of this letter, Sergeant Quackenbush, J.P., tried his first case. Information had been laid against an ancient quack of the neighbourhood, for practising medicine without a license, and the matter was to be heard in the large sitting-room of Tinsley's Tavern. The sergeant, with good taste and wisdom, had asked to sit with him on the bench another J.P. of the neighbourhood—Mr Meadows, a well-to-do farmer. The sergeant knew that the Bombardier had espoused the cause of old Zach Brydon, and intended to defend him at the trial. Prompt to the time the placid and bald Meadows, J.P., sat down beside the grizzled and unemotional sergeant, and prompt to the time also came the Bombardier with his limping, hump-shouldered client. The Bombardier carried under his arm a volume of the Consolidated Statutes, and a copy of *Every Man his Own Lawyer*.

Information had been laid by a man, who was evidently in the employ of a Medical Association, though both the local physicians denied having encouraged the prosecution, and both, in the witness-box, tried to avoid incriminating the old man. Yet they testified that they had attended cases which old Zach Brydon had prayed over, and coaxed with herbs of harmless violence, cases mostly of chronic rheumatism, dyspepsia, dropsy, tumour, and the like. Then came people who had given themselves up to the prayers, and the unlicensed dispensing of slippery-elm bark and boneset. Their evidence, in spite of the Bombardier's stern cross-examination, strengthened the case for the prosecution. The clinching point was the question of payment to Zach Brydon for medical attendance. The Bombardier's attempt to upset this was maladroit. It was done as one would open a door with a crowbar. As point after point told against his client; as witnesses remained either obdurately malicious in their tales of wasted prayers and herb decoctions, for which hard-earned cash or notes-of-hand had been given in exchange; as others stated regretfully that they had always known and called the man Doctor Brydon or Doctor Zach; and as the informant became sneeringly triumphant and the crowd amused, the Bombardier's irritation grew.

Once or twice he had ventured to question the regularity of certain items of procedure, by reference to the fact that 'When I appeared before his Honour, Judge Monmouth,' or 'When I argued my own case at Sherbrooke against Sir Henry Smiles,' &c.; but the sergeant was rigid, and Mr Meadows was firm in a youthful kind of way.

When the moment came for the Bombardier's defence, he was filled with wrath, his demeanour was threatening. He rose, looked round through his huge eyeglass, and then said: 'Your worships, I have no hesitation in defending this much-injured man. He is the victim of busy mockers, who gnash upon him with their teeth, who lay nets for him privily, who compass him about. And why, your worships? Verily, to reap the rewards of the base informer. In some countries, your worships, and not without reason, these marauders are given bullets instead of fines. This man,' pointing to the informer—'this cowardly spy, instead of earning an honest living, invades this peaceful hamlet, and begins a scheme of vile pillage whereby to batten upon the earnings of'——

Here the sergeant interrupted. 'We inform you, Bombardier Shewell,' he said, 'that such language must not be used in court. You have to do with the evidence, not the character of the person laying the information.'

'"Person," your worship: you say well—"person" is the word. He is a person who would rob'——

'Eh! eh! eh!' quickly interposed Mr Meadows, with a motherly finger-shake.

But the Bombardier with ample scorn continued: 'I repeat, and again I repeat it, your worships—rob the poor of their benefactor, the humble of their friend, the man who, to bless suffering humanity'——

'Gives them horse-medicine, and takes their notes at ten per cent. interest!—Look in the lining of his coat, if you want to see the notes!' interjected the informer.

'You must not interrupt, sir,' said Mr Meadows. 'It—it is not gentlemanly—it—it is not permitted. I shall be quite angry if it is repeated.'

'Gentlemanly!' again continued the Bombardier; 'we were speaking of him as a *person*, not as a gentleman, your worships!'

The speech went on—a series of interruptions and calls to order. The Bombardier questioned the ability of the magistrates to know the statutes; he none too vaguely referred to beggars on horseback; he dwelt suggestively on the dignity due to the proper administration of the statutes; he appealed to the spirit of Justice; and received for the last sentiment approving nods from Mr Meadows. He closed with a warlike philippic against the informer, and finally said: 'I am firm in the belief that your worships cannot fail to give a verdict for the defendant, unless, peradventure, this court should not be a mount of the law, but a valley of the dry bones of injustice.'

Their worships, however, without a moment's hesitation, gave judgment against the defendant, with fine and costs.

The Bombardier sprang to his feet. 'We appeal to a higher court, your worships!' he said. 'We appeal from ignorance of the law, from magisterial stupidity and injustice, to the Court of Quarter Sessions.'

Upon the sensation which this provoked, there fell the cold words of the sergeant: 'It is necessary to inform Bombardier Shewell that there is in this country no such tribunal as the Court of Quarter Sessions—and there you are!'

With impotent fierceness, the Bombardier cried: 'It's a lie! It's a lie!' and sharply bringing his knuckles down on the table before him, he repeated: 'We appeal to the Court of Quarter Sessions!'

Mr Meadows was surprised and shocked. He turned to the sergeant, and whispered in his ear; then he said: 'Bombardier Shewell, if it was magisterial, we should be angry with you. But we—we fine you ten dollars for contempt of court.'

A sudden change came into the demeanour of the Bombardier. Breathing fast, and staring hard at the magistrates on the bench, he stood for a moment silent; and a cold sweat broke out on his forehead. Mechanically he found his hat. His client spoke to him, but he did not hear. His lips moved, as if he were speaking to himself. He did not take up the ***Every Man his Own Lawyer:*** it had played him false.

He turned to go, the crowd making way for him. All their amusement, all the vulgar irony and faction feeling for or against the old soldier, were absorbed in painful curiosity. Even the river-drivers took hitches in their red sashes, and shook their heads doubtfully. As the Bombardier advanced with bowed head, some one barred his way. He looked up. It was a constable.

Then the voice of Mr Meadows was again heard: 'Bombardier Shewell will please to pay his fine before he leaves the court-room.'

Sergeant Quackenbush's face was troubled, and he drew something from his pocket, but Mr Meadows whispered in his ear, and he put hesitatingly the hand back into his pocket. The soldier in him was struggling with the magistrate. The Army was being humbled: gray-headed military service was being brought low before civilians—a hero of the Alma was being fined like a common roysterer.

The Bombardier drew in a deep breath, and, turning, faced the Bench.

'You fine me! You dare to fine me, sir!' he said to Sergeant Quackenbush.

The blandness of Mr Meadows was now puffed up to a fine exaggeration of offended dignity. 'Bombardier, *we* fine you ten dollars for contempt of court. The Bench must not be insulted. The Bench, sir, must be protected. The Bench, we must inform you, Bombardier Shewell—not ourselves, not ourselves, but the Bench—cannot be set at defiance—not with impunity, Bombardier Shewell.'

The curate came forward and said to the humiliated soldier: 'Bombardier, let me settle this for you;' and he laid the ten dollars on the magisterial table.

The old soldier's cup was full. He had no money with him, and little to spare elsewhere. To be fined was a slash in the face; not to have the money to pay the fine on the spot was the last thrust home. Without a word to the curate, he blindly turned and walked through the lane made for him, out of the door, and into the street. All useless rage was gone now, and in its stead was a ponderous disgrace. In vain he drew himself up as he passed the garrulous loungers on the veranda without. His shoulders would not remain squared. His thin gray hair was caught by the slight breeze from the river, and blown about his temples, and, as he moved slowly down the steps and upon the outer side-walk, Ira Tinsley turned to the loafers beside him and said: 'Boys, it's put twenty years on his shoulders.'

When some one replied: 'It's took down his pride, I guess!' Tinsley continued: 'Say, you wouldn't snicker like that if Anthony was alive, and heard you!'

The rest of the crowd nodded approval, and watched the Bombardier. Never before had he been seen to pass a piece of wood, or a stone in his path, without flicking it aside grandly with his stick. But now he trod on a boy's hoop, and it flew up and struck him on the shin. He did not heed it. He stepped on the end of a loose board in the side-walk, and he stumbled violently, but he took no heed. Some idle boys laughed, but he made no sign. He was only more stooped as he passed on towards the bridge. The curate reached him as he entered the covered bridge, and put a hand gently on his shoulder. 'I'll walk home with you, Bombardier,' he said.

'I want to be alone,' was the husky reply. 'I'll pay you the ten dollars. I *can* pay it, you understand!' he said, shaking his stick impotently. But it was only a feeble flash of the old Adam. He relapsed again instantly into gloom. The curate saw Sophie Warner approaching, and he sighed with relief. Yet there was something else besides relief in his sigh. His eyes met hers with a mute request in them. She understood, and took the old man's arm. He resented it, but presently walked on with her.

Her pretty confidences could not draw the Bombardier from his gloom; the arrow had gone too deep. We have all different conceptions of what would shame us most: the Bombardier had found his.

He did not hear her words. He turned to her at last, his stick quivering in his hands, and said: 'He fined me—fined me for contempt of court! We appealed to a higher court, to the Court of Quarter Sessions, and he wouldn't recognise it. Do you hear? He wouldn't recognise it; and it's in the Statutes—here in the Statutes.' He nervously fumbled the leaves of the book.

'Yes, yes, dear,' she said; 'but don't mind it. You will laugh at it in a day or two.'

'Laugh! laugh!' he cried. 'Ay, ay, I'll laugh. Do they think they can bullyrag an old soldier? Do they think they can bring a man that was with Raglan at the Alma to his'——

But the last word was lost in a dry gasp.

When at last within the little room where he had passed so many years, she sought to divert him, she found it was no use. She busied herself in little household offices, sang verses of songs that she knew he liked, told him bits of gossip of the country-side, and at last began to read him his favourite play, *Henry V.* But none of the valorous brag of the old speeches would rouse him; the humour of Pistol and Bardolph and Fluellen, generally so potent, fell on dull ears. At last she bade him good-bye. At the door she looked back. He was sitting with his right hand clenched on the table, his eyes bent on an impalpable something before him.

'Good-bye,' she said, smiling; 'I'm coming to play chequers with you to-night. I'll bring Walcho. Walcho is such a good dog now, Bombardier, he remembers all you taught him, and carries his musket beautifully.'

He looked at her abstractedly, and nodded, but that was all. She remembered a phrase with which they usually began their games. She said now, with naive heroics in her tone: 'Remember, Bombardier: *à l'outrance!*'

'*À la mort!*' he answered mechanically, according to their formula. She turned away, and presently was swallowed up in the sunshine.

When she had gone, he sprang to his feet, the red fire of war in his eyes, and, turning to the wall where his accoutrements hung, he cried with threatening eagerness: 'Yes! *To the Death!*'

HOLIDAYS IN BURMA.

Soldiering in Burma is not all dacoit-hunting; there are times of peace and happiness as well, when one can enjoy a holiday in many a novel way and see sights of the strangest description. The natives, or, at any rate, those who have been born and bred under British rule, are a sporting, happy-go-lucky lot, and are, moreover, easily moved to mirth. If you meet a Burman on the road and make a face at him, he will squat down and roar with laughter; but if you were to adopt the same tactics with the mild Hindu, he would immediately imagine that he had encountered the Evil One, and either flee for dear life, or grovel on the ground at your feet. I do not wish the reader to imagine that it is my habitual custom to make faces at natives; but there are times when exuberance of spirits leads one to perform acts which the high, 'man-and-brother,' Indian official would consider most unseemly.

Thayetmyo (the Mango-town) stands on the right bank of the river Irawadi, about midway between Rangoon and Mandalay, and is a good sample of a Burman up-country town. It has many points in its favour compared with more civilised Rangoon: the inhabitants are more primitive and pleasanter to deal with in every way. In the main street are always to be seen groups of emaciated Chinamen, who represent the moneyed class of the population, though by what means their wealth is accumulated is only known to the police. Their days are apparently spent in long lounge-chairs, in the enjoyment of their quaint little opium pipes; night-time possibly sees their houses transformed into gambling and opium dens of the worst description, for Burmans of all classes and of all ages are inveterate gamblers, and are, moreover, fast acquiring the habit of indulging in the pernicious drug. In the side streets a happier phase of life is seen, and at all times of the day, groups of men are busy with one kind of amusement or another. The Burman is an extraordinary individual; he will work like a horse for three or four days, and then for a week will enjoy himself with the money which he has earned. Football is their chief athletic amusement, and is played by them as much to keep their limbs supple as for any other reason. The game is peculiar, and partakes more of battledore and shuttlecock than our game of football. The ball is six inches or less in diameter, and is composed of a network of split canes, neatly interwoven. The number of players is unlimited; sometimes a dozen men may be seen standing round in a circle; at others there may be only a couple of players, the object being always the same—to set the ball going in the air and to prevent its touching the ground again. The players wear as little clothing as possible, the *passoh* being tightly bound round the loins, and on the ball being kicked up, every one does his best to keep it going. The attitudes of the players are wonderful to look at, the ball being caught on heel, knee, or back, and sent flying in all directions. Hands, arms, and even toes, are forbidden to be used in the game, yet the dexterity with which the ball is kept up defies all description. Graceful strokes are much studied, and the swagger assumed by a Burman, poised on one foot ready to receive the ball on the other heel, is almost ludicrous to watch.

This is the only outdoor game in which the Burmans indulge, and it seems curious that, being so closely allied to people whose sole amusement is polo, and being, moreover, devoted to ponies themselves, they should not display any keenness for that best of all games.

'Moung Hpo wanting speak with master,' said my Madras 'boy' one evening.

'All right,' I answered. 'Send him here.'

Moung Hpo is a Burman who speaks pidgin-English, and gets a living chiefly by doing odd jobs for Englishmen, such as pony-buying and curio-hunting. Many a walk in the bazaar have I had with the dirty old ruffian, and a most entertaining companion I have always found him.

'Well, Moung Hpo, what is it?' I asked, as the wizen brown face appeared at the door.

'*Takén*, to-mollow they make 'em burn plenty big *phoonghye* man; if master like, I take 'em see,' was my worthy henchman's reply.

On inquiry I found that the event was a *phoonghye byan*, or cremation of a high-priest—one of the most important religious ceremonies of the Burmans, and one which I had hitherto not had an opportunity of witnessing. The morrow was Thursday—the soldiers' holiday; so I arranged an hour when Moung Hpo should come and take me to the spot chosen for the burning of the great Moung Shway Loogalay.

This particular Thursday was a busy one; we had before us quite an unprecedented list of engagements, and ere the moon rose that night, had enjoyed an immense variety of entertainment. At sunrise we were in the saddle, our stout little twelve-hand ponies delighting in the morning canter. Across the racecourse we go, and picking up half-a-dozen kindred spirits *en route*, enter a deep, sandy nullah, the bed of which has just received sufficient moisture to make it good going. This morning we had arranged a *chota hazri* picnic at the head of the nullah, and had bidden the few English ladies of the station to the feast, after which the return journey was made by a circuitous route through the bamboo and teak forests.

Riding along in single file, we presently reach a small clearing in the forest, where, on a slight eminence, stands a *phoonghye kyoung*, or priests' residence, whose dried-up-looking inhabitants we find engaged in their matutinal devotions. To-day the devotions are longer than usual, for special prayers have to be offered up and special ceremonies gone through prior to setting out to witness the cremation of the body of Moung Shway Loogalay. Little attention is paid to the intrusion of the foreigners, although, on ordinary occasions, the phoonghyes would come out to wish the *takéns* good-morning; but now even the little boy-attendants disregard our presence, and we leave the quiet retreat to its prayers.

Soon after the sun had gained a certain amount of power, we returned to the cantonment and dispersed to our various quarters. Outside my bungalow I found a quaint old Burman squatting, with a bundle under his arm. Accosting the venerable gentleman in my best Burmese, I asked him what he wanted, whereupon he unrolled his bundle and, displaying a huge volume of strange and curious designs, said, 'I makee tattoo *bohut accha*.' Now, it had never occurred to me before to be tattooed; but this appeared to be such an excellent opportunity, that I at once engaged the services of the old Burman; and having selected the most hideous and conventional-looking beast in the book of patterns, gave the order for the operation to commence forthwith. First I was told to bare my arm and to lie down on the ground; then the operator produced a razor, and carefully shaved the hair off the place where the mythical monster was to be emblazoned. After this, I was left for a short time, while some paint was being prepared, when the design was depicted on my arm with a fine brush, and I was allowed to sit up during the drying of the paint. The tattooer now unrolled a long length of rag, and from the innermost recesses brought forth his instruments of torture. I began to repent of my folly, and thought that this was hardly the way to enjoy a holiday. My stable-companion however, who was sitting gloating over my misfortune, persuaded me that it would be most disgraceful to show the white-feather before a native, so I clenched my fist and settled down to see the matter through to the bitter end. A metal instrument, some two feet in length, with a heavy brass carving of a bird at the end, was first brought out; into this my torturer carefully fitted a four-pointed pricker too horrible to describe, then, squatting by my side, he seized the part of my forearm nearest to him with his naked feet, and pressing the other part down with his left hand, he adjusted the pricker between his thumb and fore-finger, and dropped the weighted instrument into my flesh. It was a curious sensation, this first stab, and for the moment I imagined that my arm had become transfixed to the floor, but, as in most things, *ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*—and, after a while, there was a kind of fascination in waiting for the next prick. If any one wishes to know if the operation really hurts, let him get a friend to set four needles in a row into a piece of cork, and then thrust them into his arm, every now and then, when he least expects them. The first thrust will, I fancy, satisfy him.

The professional tattooer is a rapid worker, and the pricking-machine soon runs over the outline of the figure; but what takes time is the 'filling-in,' which is done with a somewhat broader *style*. Every part of the figure must be covered with either black or vermilion, and, as you see the brass bird swooping down time after time, you begin to reckon how many more strokes remain before your torture will be at an end. At last the Burman gives forth a deep sigh, and, putting his head on one side, regards his handiwork with evident satisfaction. All is over, and you breathe again in the knowledge that the mark of the beast and of the Burman is upon you, and must remain upon you to the end of all things. This was my first experience of tattooing, and, I regret to say, not my last, for I fell a prey to the wiles of the tattooer whenever he appeared, until I became a walking picture-gallery.

Tattooing in Burma is a national institution, every male being covered with figures from his waist to his knee, so that in the distance he appears to be clothed in beautifully-fitting 'tights.' The operations commence in early boyhood, a few figures being done at a time. Every description of animal, real and imaginary, from an elephant to a mythical form of cat, is portrayed, each being set in a framework of Burman writing. To be untattooed is a disgrace to a Burman youth; and following the custom of the British sailor in having himself stamped with the name of his lady love, it is no uncommon thing to see, on some part of a 'young spark's' body, a number of round Burman characters—the equivalent to Polly or Susan. How and when the custom of tattooing originated among the Burmans is unknown; but whatever the origin, tattooing is never likely to die out, as a Burman girl will have nothing to say to an unadorned man! Two rupees I gave my artist friend for his indelible picture.

Early in the afternoon we made our way to some fields on the outskirts of the town, where the *phoonghye byan* was to take place. The space set apart for the ceremony was surrounded by an immense crowd of people, elbowing one another for the best places from which to witness the great sight. The body of Moung Shway Loogalay (embalmed and swathed in cerecloth, covered with gold-leaf) had lain in the coffin for six months, the final cremation being deferred until sufficient money had been collected for the necessary ceremonies. I may here remark that the art of embalming is well understood by the Burmans, and honey is much used for the purpose, especially among the phoonghyes, who receive a great quantity of it as alms from the poor. The body is filled with honey and kept floating in it, often for weeks at a time. Before the final cremation takes place, the honey is drawn off and sold to the people, who partake of it freely. Europeans, I need hardly say, are somewhat careful as to whence they obtain their honey in Burma.

To return, however, to the ceremony. In the centre of an open space we found the huge funeral pile erected, in shape like a pagoda, and built, to a height of fifty or sixty feet, out of bamboo matting, beautified with gay-coloured paper and tinsel. Round the pyre stood several smaller erections—the offerings of the neighbouring villages, and connected with the main structure, so that they would burn with it. Soon after our arrival, the funeral car appeared on the ground, drawn by swarms of the people, every one striving to be to the front in conveying the remains of the great man to the pile. At last the tinsel pagoda is reached, and the coffin hoisted into position on to a central platform, forty feet or more above the ground. Now occurred the most curious part of the spectacle. We imagined that some venerable phoonghye would set fire to the great store of petroleum and shavings beneath the coffin, and so conclude the ceremony; but, to our astonishment, from all sides of the ground there commenced a regular fusillade of rockets, some quite small, and others of huge dimensions; the object being, as our worthy guide informed us, to gain merit by setting fire to the pyre. The majority of the rockets missed the mark altogether, and went flying away into space, to the imminent danger of the bystanders. For some time this species of target-practice continued, until at last a mighty rocket, fired from a bullock-cart, hit the mark, when immediately the whole structure caught fire. A shout of joy escaped the onlookers, and then silence fell on everything, as the crowd stood watching the beautiful pagoda fast crumbling away. The bamboo supports, as their joints became heated, went off like pistol-shots, and tongues of fire enveloped the coffin platform. The wooden shell which enclosed the sacred remains of the great priest was soon reached, and a thick black smoke rolled up into the heavens. The Burmans held their breath in awe; the phoonghye was passing into the highest state imaginable—the world of everlasting forgetfulness. As the planks of the coffin melted away, the whole pagoda fell in with a crash, and in half an hour nothing was left but a smouldering heap of charcoal. This to the general public was the end; and the vast concourse shortly dispersed, all but a small band of devout phoonghyes, who remained, grouped round the smoking embers, waiting until they had cooled sufficiently to search for any particles of the deceased man's bones which might have escaped the flames. These they carefully bore away to their monasteries to bury with due reverence. Thus did Moung Shway Loogalay find Nirvana.

One other holiday scene I have to record—a boat-race—and certainly the most exciting one at which I have ever been present. The day was the Sunday, and as we took our evening stroll towards the native town, we found the river-side densely crowded with holiday-makers, for Thayetmyo, we learned, was about to row a race against Prome, and all the world and his wife were present to witness the event.

Thayetmyo has turned out to a man, and the place is left to the care of the pariah dogs. The reason is obvious: Thayetmyo has staked its last rupee on the result, and as betting on the tape is as yet unknown in the land, the people must be on the spot to see what happens. As we pass along the crowd, we see little groups of gaily-dressed men and women discussing the probabilities of the race with voices raised in excitement, and we marvel at the change in the usually calm-demeanoured Burman. The ever-present cheroot is forgotten, and lies half-smoked behind the ear; the fruit-seller and the dealer in foul-smelling *napee* is disregarded for the boats on the river, and every one strains forward to catch a glimpse of the frail little barques. First comes the Thayetmyo boat—a long light dug-out, only a few inches out of the water, paddled by four-and-twenty of the picked youth of the place, and 'coxed' by a hoary-headed old man, who has probably rowed the course a hundred times or more. Shout after shout goes up as the people see their boat pass, and a solemn silence follows when the *Pride of Prome* comes gently up the stream. Every one is gauging the strength of the enemy, and evidently there is some anxiety for the safety of the home rupees. Defeat means ruin to the northern town, yet, even after the boats have reached the starting-point, there is not a man who would withdraw his bet were he given the chance.

To the Englishman there did not appear to be anything to choose between the two boats; they were built on almost similar lines—regular racing crafts, some sixty feet in length, and so lightly constructed as to appear to bend as the paddlers made them leap through the water. We had taken up our position by the side of a pagoda, thirty feet or so above the river, and were seated on the backs of a couple of quaint tiger-like images which guarded the entrance to the sacred spot. In front of us was a seething mass of humanity, each one more eager than his neighbour to catch a sight of the rival boats as they passed to their stations. The river stretched before us—one vast expanse, two miles or more in width—while the setting sun at our backs lit up the low hills across the water. What a wealth of colour met our eyes! What a chance for the painter's brush! A foreground of silks of every hue, then the dull gray river, with its silvery sun-decked ripples, and then the sombre bamboo-covered hills, with glorious red reflections filling the heavens on all sides.

But this is no time for thinking of scenery, for the boats are already drawn up for the start, and in another second a cry escapes the crowd—the Burmese equivalent to 'They 're off.' The river is straight at this point, and the whole race can be seen. Down they come, at a pace that would make the Irawadi Flotilla Company jealous, the two dozen paddles of each boat plunging into the water with one gigantic splash. No one speaks now, for it is obvious that the race is a tough one. The *Pride of Prome* leads by half a length, gradually gaining distance until a streak of daylight is seen between the two boats. Now a long yell of encouragement leaves the shore, and, as if in answer to the call, the *Golden Flower* shoots forward and leaves its adversary behind. Again, however, before half the course is rowed, the strangers have come to the front, and the faces of the people around us are growing long; the Thayetmyo rupees are in the balance, and it is evidently a toss-up who wins. Half-a-dozen times in as many minutes the boats change places, until within a few lengths of the winning-post, when the *Golden Flower* is seen suddenly to leap through the water, and leaving the strangers a good length behind, flies past the post an easy winner.

The pent-up feelings of the spectators now burst their bonds, and a perfect roar of delight and applause is given forth. The men snatch the flowers from their mass of hair and fling them aloft, and the women and children shriek and dance for joy. Victory has been snatched from the enemy; Thayetmyo has beaten Prome; but better still, Thayetmyo has won the Prome rupees.

A SOLILOQUY.

Not married yet, and twenty-nine!
My 'friends' are almost in despair;
I see their anxious looks incline
Towards my 'fringe,' where ought to shine
The silver of the first gray hair!

They talk no more of 'single bliss;'
But note, with eyes cast gravely down,
The joys unwedded women miss—
The husband's smile, the children's kiss
(Of course a husband cannot frown).

The fullest harmonies of life,
They say in sentences that glow,
Are wakened for the happy wife
(There's no such thing as married strife
In this enlightened age, we know).

And when they feel extremely kind,
They picture things that 'might have been;'
And think the men are very blind
Who rate the 'graces of the mind'
Below the charms of sweet seventeen!

I say no word of praise or blame:
My life has still its golden days;
And round my well-loved maiden name
Cling many a tender hope and aim
Apart from mankind and their ways.

Has light-winged Cupid fluttered by,
And is there only shadow left?
Not so; the sun is in the sky:
Why should I fold my hands and sigh,
Like one of brightness quite bereft?

But since I am not made of ice,
If Mr Right should come my way,
And whisper something very nice,
I might, perhaps, consider *twice*,
And after all not answer 'Nay!'

E. Matheson.

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DOUBLES.

Nature must have her mischievous moods, or she would never set about producing human replicas. Nobody wants them, and the unfortunate who knows he has a 'double' somewhere by no means rejoices in the knowledge, or cares to be brought into contact with his counterfeit presentment.

Two temporary sojourners at an American winter-resort started one morning from opposite points for an early stroll on the beach. Midway they met, halted, and glared at one another as they stood twitching their fingers in the selfsame way. Each looked upon a dwarfish, swarthy, wizen-faced man, with a black unkempt beard, wearing a brown check suit, and saw himself as others saw him. Neither felt like saying with Dromio of Ephesus, 'I see by you I am a sweet-faced youth;' but the readiest of the two—a New York doctor—blurted out, 'Mr Gould, I believe?' —'I am not quite sure if I am,' was the testy answer of the railroad autocrat; 'I wish you wouldn't wear clothes like mine.'—'Shave off your beard, and I won't,' snapped back the doctor, passing on. He had, perhaps, the most reason for being dissatisfied with his likeness to the Napoleon of Wall Street. People wanting 'points' respecting the ups and downs of stocks and shares stopped him in the streets, receiving his angry disclaimer of any acquaintance with such matters with sceptical laughter and rude remarks; while one particular afternoon the doctor was rendered especially indignant by utter strangers familiarly slapping him on the back, or digging him in the ribs, inquiring, 'How about that cradle?'—a salutation explained to him on taking up a newspaper and reading, 'Mr Jay Gould has presented Mrs George Gould with a cradle for her first-born.'

Doctors seem to be well provided in doubles. A London physician has his personality duplicated in that of a well-known artist; and another medico's possession of what the Germans term a *doppel-gänger* in the shape of a popular song-writer and song-singer, led to the latter finding himself stayed in a street walk by a lady, who, without any parleying, poured forth a flood of information about her ailing daughter's physical afflictions. Not till she had exhausted her theme or her breath, did she give Mr Lovett King a chance of asking whom she took him to be, and then he had some difficulty in making her believe he was another man altogether, and not the medical adviser for whom she mistook him.

Sir Edward Thornton, sometime Her Majesty's representative in the United States, and Judge Poland of Vermont, brought a well-intentioned young fellow to doubt the evidence of his eyes for evermore. At a wedding party in Washington, recognising a gentleman he had met in Mexico, he wished him good-evening, and proffered his hand for a shake. No shake came, and his greeting was returned by a curt 'I fear you have the advantage of me.'—'Is it possible that you don't recollect seeing me with my father in Mexico.'—'I don't remember ever being in Mexico,' was the freezing response.—'Why, surely you are Sir Edward Thornton?' —'By no means, sir; I am Judge Poland of Vermont.' A week or so later, the unwitting offender was at another party, and catching sight of the Judge (as he thought), walked up to him, and observed, 'That was an awkward mistake of mine the other night, my taking you for old Thornton.'—'And pray whom do you take me for now?' queried the other.—'Why, Judge Poland of Vermont, of course.' —'My name is Thornton,' said the ambassador, leaving the unlucky blunderer pondering how in the future he was to tell who was who.

One can imagine Mr Toole's delight at a north countryman addressing him as 'Mr Mayor;' whether the mayor would have been equally pleased at a member of a touring company slapping him on the back with 'What cheer, Johnny?' is a little doubtful. One man at least was delighted at discovering he had a 'double.' He was the manager of a London theatre in want of an acting manager. Among the applicants for the berth was an actor the veritable counterpart of himself. 'You're the man for me!' said the manager, clinching the engagement then and there. Having secured him as his lieutenant, the wily manager utilised the marvellous resemblance between them, by deputing the acting manager to represent him whenever an undesirable caller came to the theatre bent on an interview.

When the Strand Theatre was in the hands of Mrs Swanborough, Mr Robert Heller, the American author, had an odd experience there. Tendering the price of a stall to the money-taker, that worthy said, 'All right, Mr William; you can go up, sir.'—'What do you mean?' inquired Mr Heller.—'Oh, it's all right,' responded the other; '*you* needn't pay, you know that.' The visitor insisted upon paying, and his cash was taken under protest, the money-taker calling to the check-taker, 'Show the gentleman into a private box.' Mr Heller had scarcely settled himself, when the box-keeper appeared, telling him 'Mrs Swanborough was in the dress-circle, and wished to speak to him.'—'Mrs Swanborough wishes to speak to me!' exclaimed the surprised American; 'she does not know me!' The disconcerted man duly conveyed the reply to the manageress, the result being his return with the imperative message, 'Sir, your mother desires you to come to her at once!'—'My mother!' ejaculated Mr Heller; 'my mother has been dead many years.' However, he went to the dress-circle, and satisfied Mrs Swanborough he was not her son William, and sat down to enjoy the performance with a mind at ease as to his identity and the sanity of the manageress and her money-taker.

During their reign at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Mr and Mrs Bancroft were unpleasantly apprised of the existence of a married pair, travelling about in their shape and name, to the credit of neither. The day after returning from a holiday spent in Switzerland and Venice, Bancroft, meeting his orchestral chief, was asked what he thought of the new play at the Criterion, and said he had not seen it yet. 'Not seen it!' returned the baton-wielder; 'why, one of the band who has been with us for years told me he saw you and Mrs Bancroft in a private box at the Criterion last night.' A morning or two after, Mr Bancroft opened a letter from a debt collector, demanding immediate payment of the money due to a Ventnor hotel-keeper for carriage and horse hire. Never having set foot in Ventnor, he surmised that somebody was playing a joke upon him and thought no more about it, until a second and more peremptory demand roused him to indite an angry denial of his indebtedness. A few weeks later the hotel-keeper himself came to the theatre, stated his business, and was shown into the green-room. 'Good-evening, sir,' said the manager; 'I am Mr Bancroft.'—'So I see, sir,' said the visitor cheerily. After a little skirmishing, the hotel-keeper owned himself impressed by his supposed debtor's denial, but for which he would readily swear he was the gentleman who came to his house with a lady as Mr and Mrs Bancroft of the Prince of Wales's Theatre. Pointing to a large photograph, Mr Bancroft said, 'That is my wife's portrait.'—'Yes, and a very good likeness it is,' was the answer. Pressed for particulars, he said that his Mr and Mrs Bancroft stayed with him for a month, living on the best, and then wanted to depart without settling up, promising to do so as soon as they reached town. A compromise was effected, the gentleman being allowed to go, leaving the lady and her belongings in pawn. The cash was duly remitted and the hostage released; mine host subsequently discovering he had omitted to charge for carriage hire, hence his demand, which he was at last convinced was made in the wrong quarter, and departed disappointed but disillusioned.

Mr Bancroft, however, had not heard the last of the nefarious pair. Later on, when he and his wife were nightly appearing on the boards, two young lady friends, writing from Switzerland, expressed their surprise at seeing them there at that time of year, and inquiring why Mr and Mrs Bancroft had cut them dead twice in one day; and, at a still later period, meeting Mr James Payn, the novelist reproached him with utterly ignoring him and Mrs Payn when passing them in the King's Road, Brighton; a charge the actor met by declaring it was a year since he had seen Brighton, and, of course, like other innocents, received a free pardon for what he had not done. Telling their 'double' grievance in their delightful *Reminiscences*, Mr and Mrs Bancroft consoled themselves with hoping that some day in the dim future they might be repaid for the annoyance endured, by becoming the recipients of legacies intended for their doubles. That was years ago, and they are still hoping.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XVII.—THE REWARD OF MERIT.

Wynyan's first intention was to write a letter of explanation regarding the drawings, and send them to Brant; but on second thoughts he determined to place them himself in his rival's hands. They formed part of Renée's patrimony, he told himself, and they were too valuable to trust to a messenger. In addition he could not help feeling a kind of pride—weakness, no doubt—in his mastery over self, and he wished to show Brant that he could be magnanimous and self-denying.

After a visit to the offices, where he learned from the manager that Mr Brant Dalton would not be there that day, he walked away reconsidering his determination, and asking himself whether it would not be better after all to send the package. He held, however, to his first decision, and went again and again, to find that Brant had not been, and was not expected till after the funeral, and the packet remained in his hands.

The whole staff attended at the cemetery,

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Wynyan standing aloof, and one of the last to go up to the grave to take his last look at his old friend's place of rest. He had noted all that took place, seen that the Deconcaguan envoy's carriage was among those that followed; and at last went back to his chambers more saddened and out of heart than ever.

For there, seeming to gnaw, as it were, into his breast at which it lay, was the temptation still with him. For days now he had been hoping to free himself from his burden, but opportunity had not served; and once more he had to battle against the desire that came hourly, and the mental fiends which called him cowardly fool for wishing to cast away the fortune within his grasp, and perhaps with it all hopes of ever winning the woman whom he loved.

But he conquered once again, and at noon next day presented himself at Great George Street. Finding that this time Brant was there, he went up, causing an eager buzz of pleasure amongst the clerks as he entered, and walked straight to old Hamber's table to shake hands.

'You, Mr Wynyan, sir!' cried the old man, clinging to his hand; 'this is a pleasure indeed.'

'I want you to take my card in, Hamber, yourself,' said Wynyan, 'and to say I wish for an interview with Mr Brant Dalton.'

'Yes, sir, I will; but'——

'But he will say that he will not see me, of course. Tell him, then, that it is about business of the greatest importance, and that I must see him.'

'Yes, sir, I will,' said the old clerk, who passed through the baize door with the card, and was absent for quite five minutes. Then he came out, looking anxious and troubled.

'It is as I feared, sir; he says he will not see you.'

'Did you tell him it was on business of great importance?'

'I did, sir, and pleaded very hard for him to hear you; but it was always the same: he said he would not see you, and at last ordered me out of the room.'

'He will not see me,' said Wynyan sternly. 'Very well; then I will see him,' and crossing to the baize door, he walked straight into the room to where the young man was seated at the table.

'Confound your insolence, sir!' cried Brant, turning very white. 'How dare you enter my room like that?'

'I sent word in first, Mr Dalton, that I wished to see you on very important business.'

'Hang your important business, sir! What is it to me? Dalton and Company have done with you, thank goodness. What do you want—to beg me to take you back?'

'That is hardly likely, Mr Dalton,' said Wynyan quietly. 'If ever I returned to these offices, it would be because their present manager had humbled himself towards one he has so brutally insulted.'

'Insulted! Bah! A pretty state of things we are coming to, when one's workpeople dictate how many hours they are to work, and at what rate, and a dismissed clerk complains of being insulted.'

'I think we had better come to business, Mr Dalton,' said Wynyan gravely.

'No, sir: we will not come to business. I tell you that I have quite done with you. You are not wanted here at all. You have been dismissed, and would have been paid, but—— Ah! I see now: you have repented of all your game-cock-a-hoop dignity, and have come to beg for the cheque which you scornfully refused. Suppose I say now that you shall not have a penny more than the law compels me to give. Come, Mr Engineer, I have you there.'

'Look here, sir,' said Wynyan sternly; 'I did not come here to bandy words with an ill-conditioned bully.'

'Bully? You infernal scoundrel!—Here, Hamber—some of you!'

He moved towards the bell; but Wynyan stepped forward so sharply that Brant shrank back, looking white.

'Silence, sir!' he cried. 'I told you I came to see you on business—important business!'

'How dare you! Don't speak to me like that, fellow!'

'I speak to you, sir, as I feel it to be my duty to speak, from respect for the dead, and for the sake of the living. Listen to me.'

Brant shrank from the stern face before him, absolutely cowed, and his eyes wandered about him uneasily, as if he expected to see Wynyan draw a revolver from some secret pocket, and take revenge upon him for the injury done.

Wynyan laughed at him contemptuously, and Brant turned scarlet now.

'I came with no such intention, Mr Dalton,' he said. 'I came to speak to you about the invention, with respect to which the firm has entered into a contract with the Government.'

'Oh, that's it, is it?' said Brant, recovering himself. 'Very well then, let me tell you that you have no claims whatever. I find no mention of you in my uncle's papers.'

'I have come to make no claims, sir.'

'Then why have you come?'

'If you will give me time I will tell you,' replied Wynyan. 'The plans, drawings, and explanations of that invention, where are they?'

'In the safe, of course. What is it to you?'

'I repeat your question, sir. What is it to you? They are not where you say.'

'What!' cried Brant, bending forward to the table drawer, taking out the keys and going into the next room to open the safe, while Wynyan stood looking after him, till the young man came back looking wildly excited.

'Gone!' he cried. 'You know something of this. They are stolen.'

'Indeed!'

'Yes, I see it all now. You have them, and have come to make terms for their restoration.'

'Yes, I have them, Mr Dalton,' said Wynyan very quietly, as the scorn in his eyes intensified; 'and as to terms for their restoration, the only ones I would make, if I had the power, would be that you should honestly carry out the contract with Government for the benefit of your cousin.'

'You leave her name out of this business, if you please,' snarled Brant. 'Now then, those papers.'

'Here they are,' said Wynyan, drawing them from his breast; and in an instant they were snatched away, Brant drawing back quite on his defence the next moment, and with a look of triumph on his weak, handsome face.

'Now then, sir,' he cried triumphantly, 'have the goodness to explain how they came into your possession.'

'Simply enough,' said Wynyan: 'they were grasped in your uncle's hand as he lay there where you now stand, dying, as I believe, from excitement after some quarrel with his nephew.'

'That's a pretty tame story, Mr Wynyan,' cried Brant, after involuntarily shifting his position on the hearthrug. 'Why didn't you put them in the safe?'

'For the simple reason that my time was occupied in trying to save your uncle's life.'

'Exactly, and afterwards, you pocketed them, I suppose.'

'I placed them in my pocket at the moment.'

'And stole them,' said Brant.

'Stole that which was to all intents and purposes my own?'

'Your own! It's plain enough. I see now: you stole them to—to -to copy,' cried Brant, who could hardly master his hesitation.

'Why should I copy them?' said Wynyan contemptuously.

'To sell—to rob the firm that employed you, or else to try and make terms afterwards for their restoration.'

'Stole them to copy!' said Wynyan, with a contemptuous smile which made Brant wince. 'Stole them to copy a paper of which every word, drawing, and calculation is indelibly printed in my brain. Brant Dalton, you are too contemptible.'

'Oh, am I?' cried the younger man. 'Never mind that. Now then, go on.'

'I am going directly, my good sir.'

'I mean—say what you have to say, sir. What terms do you exact from me for bringing them back?'

'There is only one payment I could expect, Mr Dalton,' said Wynyan; 'and that is a full apology for the insults which you have heaped upon me. I do not expect it, sir, from you, so you see I make no terms. As you are aware, those plans are of enormous value, and I did not feel justified in sending them by messenger or post. I felt that I must place them safely in the hands of Robert Dalton's representative. I have done so. Our business is at an end.'

He turned and left the room without another word, leaving Brant clasping the envelope in one hand, biting the nails of the other.

He could not grasp the possibility of a man behaving with so much magnanimity; and one minute his active mind was busy seeking motives for the return, the next he was mentally writhing in the recollection of the scorn and scathing contempt his rival had displayed.

Some people are skilful at measuring others' corn by their own bushel, and finally Brant Dalton set to work at this proverbial task.

'I don't care,' he cried, examining the well-known documents carefully: 'there's some dodge in it. He has been doing something to them. He has been altering or cutting out and mutilating them till they're all wrong.'

But no: he could see no trace of an erasure or addition; and at last he gave up in despair.

'I don't care,' he repeated: 'there's a something; and if I find it out, I'll charge him with stealing and altering what should be a valuable property. Forewarned's forearmed. He don't catch me on the hip. I'm ready for him, and not such a contemptible fool as he thinks for.'

He touched the electric bell, and the young clerk entered.

'Look here, Gibbs,' he said.—'No: send Mr Hamber here.'

The old man came in directly, and stood respectfully waiting till Brant chose to speak.

'Here, Hamber: come close to the table. Have you seen these plans before?'

'No, sir.'

'Do you know what they are?'

'I should presume that they are the drawings for the great invention in which Mr Dalton was so deeply interested.'

'That's it. Now, look here: these plans were kept in the safe.'

'Yes, sir: they would be—with the other plans and drawings.'

'Well, that man'——

'That man, sir?'

'Yes: that scoundrel Wynyan'——

'I beg your pardon, sir,' said the old man warmly; 'Mr Wynyan is an honourable gentleman, and your late uncle's trusted friend.'

Brant banged his fist down upon the table in a way which made the ink splash out of the stand.

'Look here,' he said brutally; 'the sooner you know your position, sir, the better. You're a very old man now.'

'Yes, sir, very,' said Hamber sadly.

'Then if you want to stay on, be careful of what you are about. Now listen. That scoundrel took away these plans.'

'Indeed, sir! Well, no doubt, Mr Wynyan had good reason.'

'You keep your mouth shut and listen. I've warned you once, and I'm not going to warn you again. Now then. Wynyan had no business to take away those plans. You bear witness that he took them.'

'I don't know that he took them, sir.'

'I have just told you that he did, sir, and this morning he has brought them back. Why?'

'I am sure I don't know, sir.'

'Then I'll tell you. He either took them away to copy, or else he meant to steal them.'

'Mr Brant!' cried the old man reproachfully.

'Silence, you old fool! I say if he did he repented, because he was afraid of the consequences as soon as they were missed.'

Old Hamber shook his head.

'Or else he has had them away to alter them and make them worthless. Now you understand?'

'No, sir, I'm afraid I don't,' said Hamber sadly.

'Then if you don't, you haven't brains enough to be of any use here, and you had better go.'

'Yes, sir, I think that will be best,' said the old man rather piteously; 'I had better go.'

'No: you'll stop. I may want you. There, that will do. You see now that these plans have been away and returned.'

'If they have, sir'——

'I tell you they have.'

'Then Mr Wynyan must have taken them away to improve them.'

'Will you be silent, sir! Now go back to your table and enter into your big diary everything connected with Wynyan's visit here this morning, and his returning the papers.'

'Yes, sir,' said the old man sadly; and looking broken and very old, he left the private room.

'Yes,' he said, as he went back to his seat, took up the diary, opened it, and began to make the entry in his clear copperplate hand; 'he is quite right. I am no longer of any use here. Yes I am,' he said suddenly, in a low firm voice. 'Not so old as all that. What does the song say?—"There's life in the old dog yet." There is, and enough to make him keep watch for your sake, my dear old friend, who perhaps can now read my thoughts, and for that of your dear sweet girl. God bless you, my dear! John Hamber is not going to run away from his post, let him say what he will; and maybe I can do Mr Wynyan a good turn yet if ever there is need.'

Then, with the most punctilious care, the old man made his entry, crossing every 't' and dotting every 'i,' and ending by reading his note through, and punctuating the clearly written account of the young engineer's visit.

'And after all,' he said then sadly, 'what I have been writing down may do him a lot of harm. No!' he added directly after; 'the truth is great, and will prevail.'

BANANAS.

The banana, or plantain, is the principal fruit consumed in the tropics, and, from its nutritive qualities and general use, must be regarded as an indispensable article of food, rather than as a luxury. Throughout the tropical regions of Asia, Africa, and America, and in the islands of the Atlantic and Pacific, everywhere between the parallels of 38 degrees north latitude and 35 degrees south latitude, wherever the mean heat of the year exceeds seventy-five degrees Fahrenheit, bananas are grown for shade or fruit, their culture being not less important in the tropics than that of cereals and farinaceous tubers in temperate regions.

The bananas are the largest of tree-like herbs, and, including leaves, often attain a height of from twenty-five to forty feet. Besides the fruit-yielding species, many are grown solely for their ornamental appearance, and in this respect they are surpassed by few plants which are admired for their graceful foliage. The largest of the ornamental bananas is the Abyssinian banana, the leaves of fine specimens of which attain a length of thirty feet and a breadth of three. The smallest banana, recently discovered in Western China, has leaves only a foot long. Between these extremes the intermediate forms are very numerous, and all are extremely graceful and attractive.

Belt, writing of their growth and appearance in tropical America, says: 'The banana shoots up its succulent stem, and unfolds its numerous entire leaves with great rapidity, and a group of them waving their silky leaves in the sun, or shining ghostly white in the moonlight, forms one of those beautiful sights that can only be seen to perfection in the tropics.'

The true bananas are natives of India, Malaysia, and Polynesia, where they have been cultivated from the earliest times. The edible species appear to have migrated with man into all the climates where they can be grown. The distribution of the plant is greatly facilitated by the ease with which the suckers, from which it is mainly propagated in cultivation, can be transported, and the length of time during which they retain their vitality. No plants require less care to establish. Once they are planted, the produce of banana trees is very large. According to the often-quoted calculation of Humboldt, though less nutritious than wheat or potatoes, in proportion to the space occupied and the culture and care required, their produce as compared with wheat is twenty-three to one, and compared with potatoes, forty-four to one.

Besides the numberless varieties of the common bananas and plantains of the tropics, several other distinct species are cultivated for their fruit or for other purposes. Indeed, in some form or other, every species of banana is of economic importance, and in the numerous uses to which the various parts are put, the plant is only equalled probably by the palms and bamboos.

The fruit presents an immense variety in size, shape, colour, and texture. The pulpy or edible fruits, when ripe, may be smooth or rough, opaque or glossy, and in colour offer a variety of rich tints produced by the combination of red and yellow in different proportions. They may be from three to ten, or even eighteen inches in length, and in shape vary from nearly spherical to an oblong, cylindrical, or indistinctly angular shape. The edible fruits are arranged in clusters, which are known as 'hands,' of which there may be from three to ten or even eighteen on each spike. Each hand may have from eight to eighteen single fruits, or 'fingers,' and the total number of fruits in a bunch may be as few as twenty-four, or as many as two hundred and fifty, or even more. The bunch may weigh altogether from thirty to ninety pounds.

The fruit of the common banana is oblong, three to eight inches long, and one and a half to two inches in diameter, forming from three to nine bundles of about a dozen each. It is yellow or reddish when ripe, and the flesh is fit for eating without requiring to be cooked. This species is universally grown throughout the torrid zone, for the sake of its fruit. It also yields an inferior fibre.

The common plantain bears a cylindrical fruit, six inches to a foot long, yellow or yellowish green when ripe, with a firmer and less saccharine pulp, which requires to be cooked before it can be eaten, whether it is used green or ripe. Owing to the multitude of varieties, no definite distinction can be drawn between the bananas and plantains. They are variously named in different parts of the world, and often the word plantain is applied indiscriminately to both fruits, but in general the term is used to designate those fruits which require cooking to make them palatable.

Besides the common banana, the Chinese or dwarf banana is extensively cultivated in the tropics, and also in some sub-tropical countries, and it furnishes a large part of the bananas imported into this country. The whole plant is only from four to six feet high, with leaves two or three feet long and a foot broad. It produces abundantly—as many as two hundred and fifty or three hundred fruits in each cluster. The fruit is oblong, slightly curved, four or five inches long, and about an inch and a half in diameter. It is seedless, with a rather thick skin, and delicate, fragrant flesh. The plant is a native of Southern China, and was introduced into England from Mauritius in 1827. It is now cultivated extensively in Polynesia, where its introduction, due to John Williams, 'the Martyr of Erromanga,' effectually stopped the famines which had previously been occasionally experienced in these islands, as its robust growth and smaller height enable it to withstand the gales which frequently destroy plantations of larger bananas.

To the European palate bananas are slightly insipid, but a liking for them is readily acquired. Among the immense number of varieties, some acquire by cultivation an exquisite flavour, said to surpass that of the finest pear. The flesh of the finer kinds is no harder than butter in winter, and has much the colour of the finest yellow butter. It would be as difficult to point out all the kinds cultivated in the East Indies as to describe the varieties of apples and pears grown in Europe. The Indian Archipelago and the Philippine Islands are the richest regions in cultivated varieties, and produce the finest and most delicately flavoured fruits.

The coarser varieties found in Central Africa attain a great size. Stanley, in his *Darkest Africa*, mentions specimens of plantains found beyond Yambuya, twenty-two inches long and eight inches round, 'large enough to furnish even Saat Tato, the hunter, with his long-desired full meal.' Every stalk bore an enormous bunch of from fifty to one hundred of these big fruits.

Bananas require a moist and uniform heat. They flourish in deep rich soil, newly cleared forest-land containing plenty of vegetable mould being especially adapted for them. Their luxuriant growth rapidly exhausts the soil; but by proper cultivation and liberal manuring, land may be made to grow them for a considerable time. Contrary to general belief, they require much careful and laborious attention to produce marketable crops for export. For example, it is stated that in Jamaica the land requires to be weeded, ploughed, and harrowed seven times during the year, and forked round the roots once a year. The profits are large, and there is no long waiting until the plants bear. From the planting of the sucker until the bunch is reaped, the average time is twelve months, and then the planter may expect two or more bunches from fresh shoots during the next nine months.

Bananas are largely grown in England under glass, but more for the sake of their handsome foliage than for fruit. In Kew, however, and other establishments with large 'palm'-houses, large-sized plants are grown, which fruit freely, and travellers have pronounced the best specimens superior in flavour to those obtainable in the tropics. In 1877, a bunch of Chinese bananas which weighed ninety-eight pounds, grown by Sir Henry Peek, was exhibited at a meeting of the Royal Agricultural Society; and the *Gardener's Chronicle* states that there were growing in 1894 at Parkfield, Worcester, two plants of the Chinese banana carrying clusters of fruit of eighty and one hundred pounds-weight respectively.

Of late, the taste for ripe bananas has spread to temperate countries, but the merits of plantains as a cooked fruit are not yet recognised outside of the tropics. The trade in the fresh fruit between the United States and the West Indies and Central America is enormous. In 1893, thirteen million bunches were received at ports in the States, valued at the wharf at nearly four million pounds sterling. The consumption in this country and on the Continent is as yet small, and is supplied from Madeira and the Canary Islands. The fruit imported is not of very good quality, which may account for the trifling demand. It is the produce mainly of the Chinese or dwarf banana—an excellent fruit when well grown and fully ripe; but the imported fruits appear to have been cut down before they are fully grown, and the pulp is dry and mealy, with but little flavour. A few bunches occasionally arrive from Jamaica, but the fine qualities do not stand long sea-voyages.

The Canary banana, as it is called at Covent Garden, is imported in tall narrow baskets, made of the split stems of a reed specially grown in the island for this and similar purposes. Each basket contains one bunch, which stands on end in it, and is carefully packed with dry banana leaves. The base of the fruit-stalk projects beyond the sacking which covers the mouth of the basket, and affords a convenient handle for lifting the package.

In the green state, and cooked in various ways, the plantain forms the staple food of millions in tropical America, where it almost takes the place of cereals. About six and a half pounds of fruit, or two pounds of dry plantain meal, with a quarter of a pound of salt meat or fish, is the daily allowance for a labourer in the West Indies. In Jamaica, the working negroes prefer plantains to bread, boil or roast them in the ashes, and eat them quite warm. The ripe fruit sliced, and fried or baked, much resembles baked apples.

Speke, in his *Nile Journal*, thus enumerates the uses of the plantain in Central Africa: 'A chip from the stem washes the hands, and makes the wet flesh-rubber of the Waganda; threads and lashings for loads are also taken from the stem; rain is collected in the green leaves, which can be made into an ingenious temporary pipe; the dry leaves make screen-fences and sacks to hold grain or provisions: the fruit dried is like a Normandy pippin; a variety, when green and boiled, is an excellent vegetable; while another yields a wine resembling hock in flavour.'

The inner undeveloped leaves, when quite white and tender, as well as the flower-buds, are often eaten in the East Indies, while in many places the young flower-heads are cooked and eaten in curries.

In the West Indies, the dried leaves and prepared portions of the stem are used as packing materials. Fresh leaves are used to shade young coffee or cacao seedlings in nursery beds, and to cover cacao beans during fermentation. The young unopened leaves are so smooth and soft that they are used as 'dressing' for blisters. In India, the dried stalk of the plantain leaf is used as a rough kind of twine, and the larger parts are made into small boxes for holding snuff, drugs, &c.

In the Malay Peninsula, the ash of the leaf and leaf-stalk is used instead of soap or fuller's earth in washing clothes, and a solution of the ash is often used as salt in cooking. In the Dutch Indies, the skin of the plantain is used for blackening shoes. The juice which flows from all cut parts of the banana is rich in tannin, and of so blackening a nature that it may be used as an indelible marking-ink. In Java, the leaves of the 'wax banana' are covered on the under-side with a white powder, which yields a valuable wax, clear, hard, and whitish, forming an important article of trade. The ashes of the leaves, stem, and fruit-rind are employed in Bengal in many dyeing processes. In Siam, a cigarette wrapper is made from the leaves.

Fibre is got from the stems of many kinds of bananas. The most valuable is the 'Manila hemp' of commerce, which holds the chief place for making white ropes and cordage. Old ropes made of it form an excellent paper-making material, much used in the United States for stout packing papers. The Manila hemp industry is a large one. About fifty thousand tons of fibre, valued at three millions sterling, are annually exported from the Philippine Islands. The Manila hemp plant is grown exclusively in the south-eastern part of the Philippines, and all attempts to grow it elsewhere have failed. Many articles are made from Manila hemp—mats, cords, hats, plaited work, lace handkerchiefs of the finest texture, and various qualities of paper. At Wohlau in Switzerland an industry has been started for making lace and materials for ladies' hats from it. By a simple process it is made into straw exactly resembling the finest wheat straw for plaiting.

From remote times the practice has existed in Central Africa and Polynesia of making a palatable drink from bananas by quite simple processes, and the proposal has lately been made to import the bananas in pulp to Europe for the purpose of making wine.

A process of preserving bananas by drying, either in the sun or by hot-air fruit-drying machines, has been tried with some success, and bids fair to extend. If carried out so as to preserve the flavour of the fruit, the product might become as popular as the familiar dried fruits of commerce.

The frequent mention made of plantain meal in Stanley's *Darkest Africa* and Dr Parkes's *Personal Experiences*, aroused interest in the possible use of this material for food purposes in temperate climates. These travellers speak very highly of its excellent digestive and nutritious qualities. Indeed, but for the plantain, either fresh or made into meal, the expedition would have ended in complete disaster. The meal had the advantage of portability over the fresh fruit.

The best banana meal is made from the unripe fruit by stripping off the husk, slicing the core, drying in the sun, reducing to powder, and finally sifting. The fresh core yields forty per cent. of meal, and an acre of ground planted with bananas yields a ton. There is in tropical America a vast amount of waste in connection with the cultivation of bananas for export. Only the finest bunches have a marketable value, and the rejected fruit might easily be turned to profitable account for drying and making into meal, once the proper methods were recognised.

THE BOMBARDIER.

CHAPTER IV.

At six o'clock that evening the sergeant sat in his room, writing with laborious fingers. At last the document was finished. He rose, filled and lighted his pipe with caressing slowness, his eyes still on the manuscript. When the pipe was going well, he picked up the letter and read it aloud to an imaginary audience, pausing occasionally to grunt: 'That'll go, Quackenbush, J.P.'

'To Matthew Shewell, Bombardier.

'Sir—I desire to begin this letter by assuring you of my great respect, the same being due, and likewise honour, from me to a non-commissioned officer who was fighting for his country when I was a boy—though no blame to me for that. I pen these lines, the which are to convey to you my regret for the occurrence in court this afternoon, and for other occurrences, the same being unfortunate in their nature. I am a man, sir, that aspires to live at peace with my fellow-men—when not on the field of battle where duty calls, and it's fight whether you like it or no—and I want to be friendly to one who has served under the Flag. Circumstances have hitherto—and I admit it with pain, the which is a confounded nuisance—prevented us from being allies. If you but say the word, there being no necessity for compromise on your part, the same being made by me, we shall drive circumstances out of the field, bag and baggage; and the campaign shall end, and peace shall follow, and join occupation of territory. In a word, sir, I seek peace;

you grant it, and we've got circumstances by the scruff of the neck—and there you are!

'All of which being my wish, according to these presents, it is my hope, sir, that you will regard this communication as not coming from Brigg Quackenbush, J.P., but from him who subscribes himself with substantial respect, yours to command,

BRIGG QUACKENBUSH, Sergeant.'

At this moment the Bombardier was walking up and down among the pines in front of the sergeant's house. A few hundreds of yards away was the graveyard, and, even at this distance, and in the growing dusk, the dim outlines of the monument over Anthony's grave could be seen. But the old man's eyes were for the house, not for the graveyard. A wild fire was in his eye, telling of a mind strained to the point where reason trembles. Anger, hatred, were wrenching judgment from its moorings. Once the old man came within the light of the window. Something flashed. Under his arm were two long artillery sabres!

He retreated again into the shadows, and it grew darker. After a time the light was lowered in the house, the door opened, and the sergeant appeared, a letter in his hand. He stepped briskly forward into the shadows of the pines, where he was stopped by a sharp 'Halt!'

The old soldier barred his path.

'What, Bombardier!' said the sergeant, and stopped abruptly as he saw the sabres.

'No words, sir, no words,' was the hoarse rejoinder: 'we had words and insults, sir, this afternoon. To-night we shall have acts and *satisfaction*—satisfaction, you understand!'

'But, my God! Bombardier, you must surely see'——

The other interrupted: 'Silence, sir! There is a sabre'—throwing it at the sergeant's feet—'here is one for me. We settle our differences upon the spot.' He threw his coat aside.

'Bombardier, this is madness,' was the reply. 'I can't fight with you. This isn't France. Men in the army don't fight duels.'

'No!' scornfully exclaimed the other: 'soldiers don't fight duels now, but they did in my day when they were men, and not braggarts and cowards.'

'You go too far. I want to be friends with you, Bombardier. I'd written you a letter. I've got it in my pocket—a letter of peace'——

Again the sergeant's speech was cut short. 'You wrote it because you're a coward; but you shall see what the men were that fought at Alma. There is your sabre. Now, sir, ready.'

But the sergeant did not stir.

'I will give you till I count twenty, and if you are not ready then, I shall kill you as you stand, so help me God!' cried the old man.

The sergeant's face suddenly became set and stern. He stooped swiftly, caught up the sabre, and unsheathed it.

'I shall defend myself, Bombardier Shewell, but my blood shall not be on your head, I warn you.'

The old man made no reply, but clutched his sabre tightly, and changed his position. He now faced the graveyard. All at once, something seemed to paralyse him. His eyes dilated, his body became transfixed, and the raised sabre tremblingly pointed towards a mysterious thing. The sergeant turned to see, and there behind the church, at the spot where Anthony's grave should be, there rose slowly a round white light. It stayed a moment steady, and then came slowly towards them. The sabre dropped from the Bombardier's hand. He shuddered, and covered his face with his arm. A moan broke from his lips. 'From—Anthony's—grave!' he moaned.

The sergeant came quickly forward, and took the old man's arm. 'Come away, come away!' he whispered.

But the Bombardier fell on his knees: 'God forgive me,' he cried. He dared to look again. The light rose and fell, and then disappeared.

'It's a warning, Bombardier,' the sergeant said: 'Come home, come home!'

Rising slowly, feebly, to his feet, the other said: 'Your life is spared, sir. I shall go home—alone—sir—alone.'

He drew himself up with an attempt at dignity; but this was lost upon the sergeant; it was the very shreds of deportment. The sergeant sighed, picked up the sabres and handed them to his foe, who mechanically put them under his arm, and, with one troubled glance to the graveyard, walked away down the hill through the pines and junipers. As he did so, the sergeant heard footsteps behind him, and turning, he saw Sophie Warner cross the path, going towards the main road. She had been visiting Anthony's grave. She was carrying a lantern, but its light was out.

It occurred to the sergeant that he ought to follow the Bombardier, for the unfrequented path which he had taken was crossed by streams, and interrupted by culverts and ditches. So, keeping well behind the Bombardier, he came down the hill, into a by-road, then along a lane parallel to the Cascarada, now swollen by reason of dams let loose above, to float a late drive of logs. The lane emerged upon the main street, beside Tinsley's Tavern, and near the bridge. At the left of the approach to the bridge was an open space of sheer bank, unprotected by railing of any kind. As if with an instinct of danger at hand, the sergeant quickened his footsteps, only to see the Bombardier, in his abstraction, walk over the bank. He heard the splash, the rattle of the sabres; but not a cry, not a human sound.

With a loud call of 'Help!' he pulled off his boots and coat, and jumped into the swift-running river. He saw a hand thrust up from the stream, some distance below him.

He swam boldly, and passed under the bridge, following the hand. A moment later, he dived and caught a body in his arms. As he rose he was struck by passing logs. To his right was the stable of the hotel. Its foundations were timbers, sunk into the bed of the river. With head scarcely above the swirling current, he struck out for them, and by splendid efforts was at last able to throw one arm round a steadfast post, and so hold the Bombardier's body to him. His head was bleeding, and blood was blinding his eyes; the Bombardier's unconscious face was swollen from a blow. When he could get breath he called aloud. Presently he saw lanterns gleaming on the shore. Then a boat was launched. It came quickly towards them, and, at the same time, planks were loosened and lifted overhead.

CHAPTER V.—CONCLUSION.

A week later, on the stroke of midnight, the Bombardier waked to consciousness. He put up his fingers to his head, moved it across his brow dazedly, and then looked at his white wrinkled hand. He opened and closed it feebly, shook his head wonderingly at first, and then understandingly. Presently, voices in the other room attracted his attention.

'Well, anyway, he's had a tough campaign, sergeant. It's been a close call.'

'An old soldier isn't to be juggled from the world without a struggle, fiddler.'

'But the struggle was chiefly yourn, sergeant. Picture isn't the name for the way you looked as you hung there to the post with your arm round him, and our lanterns in your face, blood all over it: and only that day he'd given you the lie in court!'

'Pass that Ten-year-old, fiddler.'

The fiddler continued: 'I hain't anything particular agen the Bombardier, if it wasn't for his 'me-and-the-Almighty-done-it' kind of manner, and I'd do anything I could for him.'

'I believe you, fiddler—not so much water—hang it, man, don't drown it!'

'But, sergeant, he don't know everything, no way you can put it, even if he was with Raglan at the Alma.'

The sergeant sat up straight in his chair, and said severely: 'Fiddler, I want to say here, as I've said before, that Bombardier Shewell has a right to be proud. He's got more brains, and he's *had* five times more brains, than any non-commissioned officer I ever knew. He's one of a race of veterans that's almost gone. He's a V.C-er without the V.C. When he gets well, I don't suppose he'll like me any better than he did before, but I've laid out my scheme for a peace campaign, and I'll have it if I can. And here's to it, and the day the Bombardier is on his feet again, say I—and there you are!'

The two touched glasses.

The old man in the bedroom had raised himself on his elbow, listening with strained attention, and, when the speech ended, he said in a broken whisper: 'A peace campaign, so help me God!'

A year later, as the two soldiers marched down the street together, arms locked, the older man said:

'Sergeant, there's never been love lost between the Army and the Church, but the curate of that barracks there has bone in his back.' He tapped the side-walk gently.

'Sound in your head, Bombardier.'

'But he needs a wife. Soldiers can get on without wives, but not parsons, sergeant.'

'That's gospel, Bombardier.'

'Then, sir—then, sir, he must marry.'

'Clear, when you put it that way, Bombardier.'

'As officers of the vestry we might bring the matter before him—informally, quite informally, eh?'

'But the petticoat, the woman—who, sir, who? There you are!'

'Tut, tut, I've better eyes than you, sergeant. There's but one woman for the lad.'

'Bombardier, I'll conjecture'——

But the Bombardier interrupted: 'No conjectures, no conjectures, sir.' He withdrew his hand from the arm of the other, and struck his stick triumphantly on the ground, saying: 'Sergeant, Sophie is the woman.'

Though the sergeant had known this for a long time, he seemed delighted at the Bombardier's acuteness, and boisterously complimented him.

After a moment's silence, the Bombardier, with a far-away look in his eyes, said gravely: 'The light from the grave, sergeant—the light from the grave—won't rise to forbid *that.*'

And the sergeant never undeceived him about the mystical light.

DRAMATIC ART IN THE FAR EAST.

By R. W. EGERTON EASTWICK.

DRAMATIC entertainments are very popular in the East, and although no great advance has as yet been made in acting or in the production of scenic and spectacular effect, the points of the plot are often well worked out and consecutively set forth. Large troops of actors are engaged in the principal towns, and move about the country districts amongst the Japanese, Chinese, Siamese, and Malays. The acting of the Japanese and Chinese is superior to that of the Siamese and Malays. Japanese and Chinese players are invariably men or boys, as no woman is permitted to take part in performances purely dramatic. It is, indeed, customary for the students who are desirous of assuming female characters to reside for months in the houses where the women congregate, and there to study the various habits, traits of character, and little mannerisms of the other sex. Now in Siam, both men and women are trained for the profession, and consequently the performances of Siamese companies are more attractive.

Amongst the Japanese and Chinese, the composition of poetry and of novel literature has existed for centuries; the poetry has been chiefly lyrical, while the novels have been merely a bald narration of facts. Gradually, written directions and notes for the performance of plays were introduced both in Japan and China; in time these writings became fuller and more complete, and eventually dramatic works were compiled and issued. In each sort of literature the Japanese have displayed more skill and greater powers of imagination.

Short stories and little poems have been from an early date popular amongst the Siamese and Malays; but, until quite recently, they were handed down traditionally. The same may be said of dramatic performances in Siam and Malaya, where even now the play-books are unsatisfactory, and leave much of the dialogue to be produced by the actors extempore. In acting, there is not much to choose between the Siamese and Malays; the Malay language—called the Italian of the East—is very much softer and more musical than the Siamese, and therefore more pleasing. The Japanese are a long way the best actors; the Siamese are the most artistic in costume; and the Malays are most attractive in speaking.

A Japanese theatre consists of a stage with a large area in front of it; and some theatres are supplied with one or more galleries running along three sides. The area and the galleries are divided into small chambers capable of holding from six to eight persons. The partitions are very low, so that the occupants, who are seated on mats or cushions on the floor, are able to see and hear everything easily. There is no 'green-room' at the back or side of the stage; but accommodation for the actors who are off the boards is provided in the area behind the audience, and the entrance to the stage is along a wooden platform, narrow and often rickety, that reaches over the heads of the persons seated in the area. As a rule, the public are not admitted to the stage: in this respect they differ from the Chinese, who still follow the custom, prevalent in Europe not many years ago, of providing seats there for the more distinguished visitors.

The plot of the Japanese play which I will now describe was in some points similar to that disclosed in *L'Assommoir*, and although the details were by no means so exciting, it most assuredly possessed merit from a dramatic point of view. There was only one scene, and that was the empty room of the 'Drunkard,' who was supposed, shortly before the commencement of the piece, to have hurried away from his home to the pawnbroker with the remnant of his goods, madly resolved to spend the money so obtained in one last debauch, and then destroy himself.

As we took our seats, the absent man's wife and only child, a girl of fourteen, entered upon the stage. They seated themselves upon the bare floor, and in a lengthy conversation informed the audience of the whole history of their past happiness, and of their now almost complete ruin. Each had managed to retain her personal ornaments and wearing apparel; but beyond that property she was destitute. Both women very naturally dwelt upon the prosperity of bygone days; after this, they described the admission into the family circle of a dissolute acquaintance, who succeeded in gradually corrupting the master of the house.

A loud knocking was now heard at the door, accompanied by shouts and cries, as of a crowd outside demanding admission to the house. A mob of creditors and other persons rushed into the room and surrounded the women, each creditor holding up and waving his bill about excitedly, and vociferating the amount due to him. The tumult lasted for some time, but eventually died away, and the creditors became seated in a large circle. The loafers and persons having no claim against the Drunkard retired, and the door was closed.

After a pause, the mother drew the attention of those present to the total absence of food, furniture, and goods throughout the house, and described in forcible language the ruin that had at last overwhelmed herself and her child, and the wicked conduct of the dissolute acquaintance, upon whom she cast all the blame. She continued her speech by reminding them of the goodness in happier times of the victim, as a husband, a father, a friend, a citizen, and as a customer, and how he always treated everybody with consideration, and paid his way like an honest man. She concluded by addressing a heart-rending appeal to them all on behalf of her unfortunate husband.

Hereupon a discussion ensued amongst the creditors, some of whom seemed to have been won over by this appeal. Then the daughter, in an attitude of most becoming humility, in her turn addressed them, and assured them, that to save, if possible, the reputation of her misguided parent from becoming altogether too unspeakably infamous, she was willing and ready to pay some portion of his debts by sacrificing all her own property, and by selling herself to the man who should be willing to pay the highest price for her to become his wife. She forthwith divested herself of her jewellery and of all her clothing except one small under-garment, and made a heap of the property on the floor.

This act of filial piety apparently overcame the objections of those creditors who were, before this appeal, opposed to the idea of showing mercy, and now the whole body united in requesting her to take back her things, as such an arrangement could not be permitted. Each creditor then delivered a long speech in praise of the love and self-denial shown by the mother and daughter, and proclaimed his intention of rewarding such conduct. When the speeches had come to an end, the men destroyed their bills, and took off their clothes; these, with any money that they happened to have about them, they handed over to the women, begging them to accept the property as a peace-offering, and as a help to the Drunkard and his family to make a fresh start in life.

The girl, in a few well-chosen sentences, expressed her modest thanks. The mother then despatched a creditor to hunt up her husband and to bring him home, whither, she assured the others, he would soon return, would settle down, and give over his evil habit at once and for ever; and, besides this, he would erelong—a very important point, and not unexpected by the creditors—pay in full every one of his debts.

Such was the plot of the play, which lasted some five hours, and during this time the Japanese audience either listened and smoked, or relieved the strain upon their mind by eating or sleeping. Any one who knows the

Japanese character will readily understand how elaborately each actor performed his part. There was no hurry or attempt to slur. Information or a suggestion which would have been conveyed in a few sentences on the European stage, afforded an opportunity to the Japanese author of giving a speech that lasted over a quarter of an hour. In such entertainments, as in their daily life, the Japanese have always shown themselves the slaves of detail, giving to the smallest minutiæ an altogether unnecessary prominence. Besides this, all the little social politenesses which have to be observed between even the nearest relatives have been always reproduced with most careful exactitude, much time being consumed thereby. In these respects they are more particular than the Chinese; but the latter lose any advantage as to time which they might thus gain, by permitting no more than two actors simultaneously to be upon the stage during the dialogue of the play.

I will now turn to Siam. A short time ago, while I was living in Penang, in the Straits Settlements, I had the good fortune to be present at the performance of one of the stock pieces of the Siamese drama. The players were members of the best trained company ever despatched from Bankok. The dramatic entertainment happened to be a mere adjunct to a ceremony that had taken place in the early part of the day, at which I was also present, and of which I may here give a short description.

On the occasion of the ceremony about which I am writing, a son of a deceased Rajah, having attained the age of puberty, had reached the time of life when it was necessary for the solitary lock of hair to be removed by the razor from his otherwise clean-shaven head. Invitations had been sent to all the principal persons living in the neighbourhood, both European and native.

At eight o'clock in the morning, the youth, clothed in gorgeous raiment, and covered with all the valuable family jewellery, was conducted to a seat under a handsome silk canopy, erected in the courtyard in front of the house. When all the relations and guests had assembled, two Buddhist priests appeared, and one of them extracted the plug from a funnel-shaped receptacle fixed in the canopy above the youth's head. A slender stream of water at once descended upon him, and was permitted to flow all over his beautiful clothes. The second priest then produced a razor, and forthwith shaved off the lock, or top-knot as it might be called. Some prayers were said by the priests in the Pâli language, which is not understanded of the people; and the youth, having taken the vow of poverty, was then, without any more ado, received into the priestly body according to the Siamese custom, which requires every youth, after the age of puberty has been reached, to serve a sort of lay apprenticeship for at least twelve months; a period curtailed, however, in the case of the king and other exalted personages to a few days or hours.

The priests then withdrew, the guests offered their congratulations to the youth and his family, and the ceremony concluded with cakes, cooling drinks, and sweetmeats being handed round. In the evening, I joined a numerous company of relatives and friends who were entertained at a sumptuous banquet, served *à la Française*, when no ladies were present, although from time to time their smiling faces were to be seen at the side of a large screen placed across one end of the dining-hall. At eight o'clock we left the table and betook ourselves to the Siamese theatre.

Within fifty yards from the house we found a large wooden platform, covered by a roof of *atâp* (leaves of a palm, and similar to those of the coco-nut tree), and resting, at about four feet distance above the ground, upon strong piles, that had been driven into the soft soil of the plantation which encircled the residence. One-third of the platform was partitioned off as a 'green-room,' and the remaining space had been left for the orchestra, who occupied one side, for the seats of distinguished visitors on the other side, and for the performance of the play in the centre. The musical instruments consisted of drums, flutes, and wooden staves. The last named contributed very much to the din, if not to the harmony, of the evening's entertainment, when they were struck either against each other or upon the platform. Two members of the band held books of the play, which they consulted from time to time; and when required, they assumed the duties of prompter. At certain intervals, the music ceased, when the prompters—a middle-aged man, probably the proprietor of the 'show,' and a very pretty young woman—laid aside their musical instruments and delivered harangues in a shrill monotonous key. These harangues, I was given to understand, were necessary, and were always looked for by the audience with much eagerness, as through them alone were divulged many points of the plot which the author had purposely or unavoidably excluded from the speeches and play of the actors. In fact, the author sought to atone for his deficiencies either by introducing the character of 'Rumour,' as is the case in some of Shakespeare's plays, or by calling in the assistance of a 'Chorus,' as was customary in the Greek drama.

The space intervening between the stage and the house was occupied by a large crowd of natives—men, women, and children.

There were eight players; of these, two were men, and the others were pretty plump young women. The dress of the latter consisted of a close-fitting tunic, which left the arms bare from the shoulder, and of a very short skirt scarcely reaching to the knee. Handsome ornaments were worn upon the head; and the neck, arms, wrists, and fingers were ablaze with all sorts of gems and jewellery. Only one of the actresses spoke during the piece, and she took the part of the Queen. The five others appeared as ladies of the court, and their duty was to move silently and gracefully about the stage, and occasionally to pose in various attitudes, which were sometimes elegant, but more often seemed to be laboured and unpleasing contortions of the body. When our party had taken the seats arranged for us upon the platform, the play commenced, and absolute silence reigned amongst the hundreds of spectators. I may say that no attempt whatever had been made to produce any scenic effect upon the stage.

The two men were the first to appear. One represented the King of some Siamese country; and the other a Buddhist priest despatched from the temple to the palace to warn the sovereign against the evil designs of a 'malignant being,' who intended to interfere at the birth of the son of his majesty. The monarch, however, being a keen sportsman, declined to stay at home and guard his consort, as such a course would entail the loss of a day's hunting.

In the next scene, the Queen advanced from the green-room, attended by the court ladies; hereupon, while the latter went through several postures, the Chorus explained to the audience that the birth of the son and heir had taken place during the absence of the King, whose immediate return was looked for by the ladies with no little trepidation, as the child had disappeared immediately after its birth. The Queen then made a long and despairing speech.

The third scene showed us the King on his return from the chase. He eagerly demanded news from the Chorus, who declined to give any intelligence beyond simply stating that a disaster had taken place, and that the priest alone could give the required information. Great amusement was then caused by the repeated and unsuccessful attempts of the King to enter the Queen's apartment, the green-room, in which he was always foiled by the united efforts of the court ladies. At last, wearied out, the King sank upon the stage, and fell asleep.

This seemed to be a favourable time for the interlude, and there was a general movement amongst the orchestra and spectators. The actresses quitted the green-room, and gathered round the prostrate but no longer sleeping monarch, chattering merrily with their mouths full of betel-nut. The petty vendors of tobacco, betel-nut, *seri* leaves, sweetmeats, and cooling drinks, hawked about their wares in every direction. After ten minutes had elapsed, the orchestra returned to their places, the actresses retired, the King resumed his sleep, and the priest appeared. He awakened the King, and informed him that the son and heir had been born during his improper absence from the palace, and that the child had been lost. Hereupon the King became distracted, and raved loudly at the Chorus. The priest, having withdrawn, reappeared in the character of the 'malignant being.' He had effected the change by simply casting a splendid bear-skin over his shoulders, and by holding the bear's head in front of his face. King and beast at once flew at one another, and a violent 'set-to' followed; each of them being armed with a *bliong*, the Malay hatchet. The blows were dexterously given, and were skilfully warded off by means of wooden clubs; ultimately, the King won, and forced the beast to disclose his unrighteous machinations.

In the last scene we were again introduced to the Queen and her ladies, who re-entered dressed in fresh and more brilliant costumes. The Chorus then explained that the Queen had found beneath her sleeping mat her lost babe, transformed into a piece of stick. The Queen walked about crying out and weeping, and holding the stick aloft for all to see. The ladies went through numberless attitudes and contortions. The priest reappeared, and told the Queen that the beast, who had escaped, had been recaptured by the King. Whereupon, the Chorus brought the play to an end by observing that the King had suffered enough for his imprudence, and would soon return to the palace with the beast, who would be compelled to restore the child to its human shape.

Two of the most noticeable features in this performance were the rapidity of the action and the subservience of detail, except so far as regarded the posturing of the court ladies, to which was allotted quite an undue proportion of the two hours occupied by the whole play. In these particulars the Siamese entertainment afforded a marked contrast to the excessive elaboration observed in the Japanese play.

It is unnecessary for me to give examples of Chinese and Malay drama, as the former very much resembles the Japanese, and the latter the Siamese. I will therefore conclude by inserting a true copy of the programme that was handed to me on entering the Malay theatre at Singapore one evening:

'GRAND GALA NIGHT.—Come and see, Come and see. The Empress Victoria Jawi Pranakan Theatrical Company will perform on Tuesday, 24th November 1892, Ever Fresh, Ever New, the most Simple, Attractive, and the Best Opera in the Malay Language—Sha-Hirjan.

'*Argument of the Opera.*—There were four Kings in Deva Logam; each of them had a son. When these four children were playing together, four fairies appeared, and said they would marry one who would defeat them in science. One of the children defeated them, and selected one fairy for himself, and ordered the other three children to select for themselves. They all wanted the same fairy selected by the first one. Then the fairies were annoyed, and threw them away to different places. At last, by the help of four Rishi Sha-Hirjan, the four children were married to four fairies.'

A DEPARTURE FROM TRADITION.

A STORY OF THE YEAR '95.

By ROSALINE MASSON.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

'MY good fellow,' I said, a trifle patronisingly, 'a man wants something more nowadays than a mere doll—a plaything. He expects his wife to be his companion.'

'I am *sure* I have heard that before,' said George reflectively. 'It has a familiar ring. Is it from *Hamlet*, by any chance?'

'His intellectual equal,' I went on, unheedingly.

'Oh, come now, old chap, draw it mild. Your *fiancée* mayn't be anything special, but she is no idiot!'

'Capable of sharing his'——

'She'll probably take it all, my boy, and allow you a pound a week—on account.'

'And any one who knows Edith,' I went on, leaning forward and taking my pipe out of my mouth as I warmed to my subject, 'knows that she'——

'Oh, good heavens! yes; and so does any one who knows *you!* Has it all by heart.'

I resumed my pipe with dignity, and leaned back.

George Seton was my oldest friend; and as such was licensed. I had been engaged for two months, and I daresay I had talked to him a good deal about Edith during that period; but I was going to be married to her to-morrow. I wouldn't quarrel with old George this last night.

'George,' I said presently, 'you'll have to come and stay with us occasionally.'

'Yes, poor old chap,' he said feelingly. 'Just send me a wire any time you are in a difficulty.'

I glared at him. 'I don't anticipate being in any difficulty,' I said stiffly, getting up and knocking the ashes out of my pipe.

'Ah well,' said George, 'before six months are over, you will probably remember my words, and fly to my faithful friendship as to a'——

But I never heard his simile, for I left the room.

Six months! It was, as it turned out, barely two and a half! But George is a gentleman and a good fellow: he never reminded me.

Next day, George was 'best-man.' He saw us off at the station, and handed a bundle of papers and magazines in at the carriage window (as if we were going to read papers and magazines!); and the last I saw of my old friend was his tall lithe figure on the platform, where he stood waving an ironical adieu. As the train moved slowly out of the station, I turned to my wife, who was busy getting the rice out of the lace of her dress.

'I like Mr Seton,' she said.

'He is a trifle cynical,' I remarked.

'Clever young men usually are,' replied Edith.

'*I* am not, dear,' I said reproachfully.

'You dear goose, who ever supposed you were?' she answered.

We went up the Rhine, and across Switzerland into Italy; and we came back by Paris. I couldn't speak any of their outlandish lingos; but my wife was rather a good hand at them all.

'I didn't know they taught you modern stuff at Newnham,' I said to her once. 'I thought it was all dead languages.'

'Oh, I've always known French,' she said carelessly.

'And German?'

'Ah well, German is absolutely necessary if you are to go at all into the modern school of philosophy, or if you want to keep in touch with Science.'

'Oh!' I said.

'And of course Italian comes very easy to any one who knows Latin.'

'Very,' I replied.

During the week we spent in Florence, my wife quoted enough of Browning to have filled two sides of the *Pink 'un.* I learned to be very sharp about it, after one or two awkward slips. You see, Browning doesn't seem to be like any ordinary poet, where you can tell that it is poetry because it couldn't possibly be prose. Sometimes the things that Edith said sounded so natural that I answered them, and that made me feel foolish. I didn't like Florence.

We came home at the beginning of October, and I made up my mind to read French and German a good deal, and—other things. That is the good of marrying a girl who isn't just merely pretty: she keeps you up. And Edith *was* pretty; but it was rather a severe type.

'I wonder if you are a good housekeeper, dear,' I said fondly, as we got into the train at Dover.

'Oh, I *hate* housekeeping,' she answered.

'What will you do, then?—have a housekeeper?'

'Well, I have a plan of that sort. But I'll tell you all about it very soon.'

And she did.

It was in a quiet corner of the Park, down by the Serpentine, the day before we left London, that Edith propounded her scheme to me. She had on a very smart new frock that I hadn't seen before, and something pink in her bonnet, and her little nose was tilted up into the air, and her gray eyes were surveying the world with an air of calm and judicial consideration which was habitual to them.

'Harry,' she said to me presently, 'we go home to-morrow.'

I said something foolish.

'And I have been thinking,' she went on, 'that it would be better to begin as we mean to continue.'

I assented.

'Now, dear, you are not clever.'

'And you are.'

'Oh, not really!—no. But compared with you, I am, of course.'

'But my dear girl, I *have* been to Oxford, and I'——

'But my dear boy, I *have* been to Cambridge, and I'——

'Oh yes, you took your degree, and I never did. But you hadn't the calls upon your time that I had. A man can't read if he—well, if he does other things, you know. That is why a girl goes to college; I've heard you say so. She couldn't read at home.'

'Precisely so. Now, I want to continue reading.'

I looked down at my placid and calm little helpmate, and a chilly horror came over me. 'Decidedly, Edith!' I said, with forced heartiness. 'We have an excellent library at Oakhurst.'

'It wasn't space, it was time I thought of claiming.'

'Yes?' I queried vaguely.

There was a pause.

'Shall we sit down on this seat?' she asked.

'Certainly.'

We sat down, and my wife unfurled a pale green silk parasol, and then she unfolded her plan.

'You see, Harry, you aren't clever,' she said, in even, unimpassioned tones. 'You are a dear, good, manly, chivalrous boy—that is why I liked you. I am *so* tired of the young man with brains who hails us as brothers. You have some of the old feeling about women left: it is such a rest.'

'I'——

'Don't interrupt.—Now, you have absolutely nothing to do. You have no profession—no pursuits. I mean, no serious pursuits. I don't count hunting and billiards. Now I am translating the *Allegoriæ Homeri* of Heraclides; and I am getting up Political Economy, so as to be able to take an intelligent interest in the questions of the day; and I contribute the articles on social and religious reform to the *Monthly Investigator;* and I am bringing out some critical essays on the Correlation of Inconceivables in Transcendental Apperception; and, when they have gone to press, I have it in my mind to take up a subject that has long had a curious fascination for me—"The Ontogenesis of the Ego, considered in Relation to the Evolution of the Indeterminate." Now all this takes time.'

'It must indeed,' I answered faintly.

'I was *sure* you would own that, Harry! Now it seems to me that, looking at it from a perfectly unprejudiced point of view, given two people setting up housekeeping—one easy-natured, idle, but very sensible about practical matters; the other intellectual, nervous, over-strained, and pressed for time—there is but one conclusion.'

'Good Lord! Edith. What *are* you driving at?'

My wife shut up her parasol. 'You must do the housekeeping, Harry,' she said decidedly.

'I do the housekeeping! What the dickens do you mean?'

'That is the second time you have sworn, dear.'

'I beg your pardon. But—see the cook, and that sort of thing?' I looked at her anxiously.

'Why not?' she asked coldly.

'But—it's generally the wife who does all that!'

'It is generally the wife who has nothing else to do.'

Well, I argued for some time, for I felt my fate was trembling on the balance; but Edith was very firm, and I knew from the first it was a foregone conclusion; so at last I made a virtue of a necessity, and said I would try it for a month or two, and see how I got on. My wife was very pleased when I consented, and was charming to me all the way home; but I'm afraid I didn't respond: I was sulky. I couldn't help looking at all the other men I passed, and wondering if any of them did the housekeeping.

Since the death of my mother, four years previous to my marriage, I had not been very much at Oakhurst. An old housekeeper—a former nurse of the family—was in charge, and she and my groom managed very nicely for me when I was alone, or, as was frequently the case, had George Seton with me. When I had a larger party, at Christmas or in autumn, my married sister, Mrs Jack Preston, used to come and act hostess for me, and bring her servants. She was a very managing little person, and it was she who had seen to pensioning off my old housekeeper and engaging the proper staff for Edith and me. I could not help wondering, during those first few days, what Polly would think of Edith's and my arrangement, for Polly would no more have thought of allowing Captain Jack to interfere in her domestic management than—ah well!—I wouldn't have cared for sister Poll as a wife.

The first evening at home, Edith and I didn't say much to one another about the housekeeping. It hung over us like a cloud, and made our conversation a little strained. While we dined, I cast furtive glances at the servants with an interest they would never, under ordinary circumstances, have inspired me with. Our establishment was small. I am not a rich man, though I have enough to live on comfortably. A sleek youth waited at dinner, and a very smart maid. I loathed the former, and feared the latter. I discovered next day that besides this there was a blunt-featured, strong-armed housemaid, and a stout and awe-inspiring cook, with an attendant satellite whom it appeared the cook took charge of, and with whom I was not expected to interfere.

My trials began next morning. I stood about aimlessly after breakfast, warming myself, and scanning the newspaper. My wife had another copy of the same newspaper, and she sat reading it with exasperating quiet. Presently the smart maid came in, and, going up to my wife, said in a soft murmur: 'The cook bade me ask you, ma'am'——

'My husband attends to all that!' said my wife, slightly waving her hand in my direction, but not looking up from her paper.

The maid stared for a moment, dumfounded. She made a step towards me, but thought better of it, and fled. Presently the sleek youth came in. I imagined he was smiling.

'William!' I said to him sharply—it was the first name I could think of—'let Charles know at the stables that I shall want my horse round at once.'

'Yessir!' and he vanished.

Still my wife never moved. My heart began to beat. I had never known it do such a thing before. I am not a nervous man—I am a bit of an athlete, and am used to feeling myself, even in men's society, muscularly superior: but the dentist's waiting-room in our tender childhood was as nothing to this.

My wife got up. 'I am now going to my study, dear,' she said sweetly. 'I must ask you to see that I am not interrupted till luncheon.' At the door she turned and gave me one look.

I got up and walked right across the hall and down the passage and into the kitchen, and found myself standing face to face with the cook before I had given myself time to think. The cook wasn't the worst—she suggested all the dinner, and looked at me in a pitying, patronising kind of way. But she *would* tell me a long yarn about the saucepans being all burnt, and she took me into a place behind the kitchen and insisted on my looking at them for myself. There we surprised the attendant satellite, who was doing something horrid with her fingers and a greasy dish that had held bacon. She gave an hysterical giggle, and received a stern reprimand from the cook in consequence. This upset me so that I dropped my eyeglass into a saucepan I was peering into.

I took down a list of all the things the cook wanted, and promised to telegraph to London for them. I told her there was a man there who got my cigars and everything for me, and he would see to it; but still I left her looking unsatisfied.

But the cook was not all. The housemaid waylaid me in the passage. She wanted to know about the thorough-cleaning, and if James (so his name wasn't William) was to blacken the boots. I said that certainly James was to blacken the boots: he seemed an idle fellow; and I told her I strongly objected to the process of thorough-cleaning, and would never sanction it. She might get up in the night, if she liked, and 'thorough-clean;' but the rooms were always to present their normal aspect during the day. Then I tried to escape; but the smart tablemaid was waiting for me at the front door. She wanted to know about 'Sundays out,' and if James was to carry up her coals for her. I told her that I was sure James would carry anything she wanted, and that she must settle about her Sundays herself: I never interfered with people's religious observances. She was the only one who looked pleased.

Then I seized my hat and crop and bolted. Charles, my own old groom, was leading Silver. He put two fingers up to his ruddy locks, and then suddenly he guffawed. So he had heard too. I rode off at an evil pace, and took to the open as soon as possible.

I was rather proud of my little dinner that evening. The curry was excellent—it was cook's idea, but there was no need to tell Edith that. But some sort of pudding came up instead of a fruit tart. I remembered ordering a fruit tart—at least cook had suggested it, and I had thanked her. I was a little put out by the pudding; it was taking a liberty to alter my orders. After dinner I was still more put out. I was naturally aggrieved that my wife said nothing in praise of the repast: a man likes to be praised when he has taken trouble about the dinner. And then, while we were having our coffee, I rang and told James to put the whisky and soda into the library at ten, and he stood grinning in the doorway like that dog in the Psalms, and observed: 'Yessir, please, sir, the missis said, sir'—— And then looked at my wife.

Edith glanced hastily up, and had the grace to get a little pink and confused.

'Oh Harry, yes! I said—I thought you wouldn't mind—you see—the library—my papers! I told them to put the tray in here.'

'Put the tray in here, James,' I said, withering him with my eye.

When we were alone, my wife apologised, and I said it did not matter this once, but I could not maintain any authority with the servants if she interfered in my department. I would as soon think of writing her articles on religious and social reform for the *Monthly Investigator.*

Edith was very contrite, and my sense of unanswerable rectitude lasted me until I faced the cook next morning, and, with the first glance, remembered with a shock that I had utterly forgotten to telegraph for her utensils.

I think I apologised too much: it is bad policy. I lost my power over the cook from that day—the second day.

POSY RINGS AND MARRIAGE.

When posies inside wedding rings were first introduced does not seem to be known. Time has covered that, as he does so many things, with the mosses of oblivion; but we know that from the sixteenth century until the middle of the eighteenth it was customary to have them engraved on rings. These posies or mottoes are seldom to be found with more than two lines of verse, and often with only one, but there are a few instances known where three lines are used. Some of these posies are very quaint and curious, and a few reach a high standard of poetic beauty. In 1642, a small collection of rhymes was published with the title of *Love's Garland; or Posies for Rings, Handkerchiefs, and Gloves, and such pretty Tokens that Lovers send their Loves.* It contains some posies that are not to be met with elsewhere, and is a very interesting work, though but few people seem to have heard of it. The South Kensington Museum has a good collection of posy rings, and amongst them we find the following: 'United hearts, death only parts;' 'Let us share in joy and care;' 'Love and live happily.' There is a story to the effect that Dr John Thomas, who was Bishop of Lincoln in 1753, caused to be inscribed inside his fourth wife's wedding ring:

If I survive,
I'll make them five.

If this be true, and not the fable it appears, we can only judge that the lady who wore the ring meant to outlive her spouse. How the story arose is not known, but most likely it is all imagination, for we find the same thing said about Lady Cathcart and her fourth husband in 1713.

Many posies are in Latin, and some few in French; but the majority of them are in English. A writer in *Notes and Queries* in 1856 mentions a heavy gold ring that had engraved inside it a piece of advice useful not only in the married state but throughout life generally: 'Beare and Forbeare.'

The following motto might be either on a wedding ring, or inscribed inside one given to a friend, for these posy rings were by no means exclusively used for the former:

Thy friend am I,
And so will dye.

It was a usual thing at this time to give a ring with a motto on it to a friend whom you greatly valued. To men it generally took the form of a seal ring; but if to a woman, a simple gold ring, or one set with stones, was more usually presented. A very beautiful posy is, 'A friend to one, as like to none' (other)—and perhaps could only be intended for a wedding ring: it seems as though it were meant to show that in marriage there should be true friendship, whatever else besides, a truth that is very often forgotten; but those who had it engraved on a wedding ring must have fully realised it. Our ancestors, in the days when posy rings flourished, held different views of marriage from ours, and no doubt they would be much astonished could they see 'marriage à la mode' at the close of the nineteenth century. They seemed to have viewed it from two stand-points—one, that it was an affair of business, to be arranged by parents and guardians solely, as is now the French custom; the other, that it should be by the mutual wish of the parties concerned. In the arranged marriages, parents who were sincerely anxious for the happiness of their children were not entirely actuated by questions of wealth or rank, though no doubt these were duly considered; but the character, disposition, and temper of the prospective bride and bridegroom were carefully inquired about before any definite overtures took place; and even where all things were satisfactory, if the principals expressed a strong dislike to the proposed union, it was usually allowed to break off negotiations.

In the cases of marriages of mutual affection, the young couple were expected to have had a sufficiently long acquaintanceship with each other to have been able to form, if they were endowed with common-sense at all, at any rate some slight idea as to the tastes, habits, and feelings of each other. That people could be found with so little common-sense as to engage or betroth themselves after having only known each other a fortnight or three weeks would have seemed to our ancestors the very climax of folly. Yet in the present day it is no uncommon thing to find persons entering upon an engagement for what—view it in whatever light one will—is the most serious event of life, with less consideration and forethought than it is wise to give to the ordinary affairs of life. How can such marriages turn out well? In the higher sense, it is impossible that they should; but the wonder is that they do not fail even more openly than they appear to do. The idea that a woman should respect and look up to the man she marries—that she should be willing to give up her own will and wishes for his, seems to be an unknown thing amongst many people. No woman with any intellect or force of character could cease to hold her own views on different points, and no man worthy of being looked up to would wish, or even endure, that his wife should be a mere reflex of himself; but unless a woman, on all questions of importance, can turn to her husband as her dearest friend and truest adviser, and unless she can submit to be guided by him, she has no right to marry him. And unless a man can feel that he is certain of his wife's sympathy, even on points where they differ—unless he can thoroughly trust her, and feel that she is not only his wife but his friend—the marriage is not what marriage should be.

Some ring posies have symbols in the place of words, as in the following:

> As God hath made my choyce in thee,
> So move thy heart to comfort me.

The word 'heart' here is represented by a tiny heart engraved in the gold. The same thing occurs on a wedding ring of the sixteenth or seventeenth century; the heart in this case is rudely cut: 'Noe (heart) more true than mine to you.'

IOU has for so long had only one meaning attached to it, that it seems strange to find it on a seventeenth-century ring in far other relation, 'The love is true that IOU.'

Surely the Monmouthshire man who caused his wife's wedding ring to be inscribed, 'If thee dosn't work, thee shasn't eat,' was determined that there should be no mistake in what he required in a wife: the only wonder is how any woman could be induced to marry him with such a threat before her eyes. The exact date of this ring is not known, but it is previous to the eighteenth century.

One of the most beautiful of all ring mottoes is to be found in a list of posies given in *The Mysteires of Love and Eloquence* (London, 1658), 'More faithful than fortunate.' It has evidently been the gift of one whose love had been rejected. In the same list is to be found, 'A heart content cannot repent.'

It is again becoming fashionable to have wedding rings with posies; and no doubt the fact that the Duchess of York had one engraved upon hers will do much to revive the old custom.

RECONCILED.

We parted where the shadows crept
Along the valley, damp and chill,
And low the wailing breezes swept
Around the solitary hill;
And Love was beaten back by Pride
With angry word and bitter speech,
Till, pausing where the paths divide,
We turned in silence, each from each.

Have we been happy? Was the thing
We strove for really worth the strife?
What gifts could Scorn and Anger bring
Save broken vows and severed life?
Oh, sweet blue eyes with trouble dim!
Oh, tender glance, half frank, half shy!
Love's cup runs over at the brim,
And shall we lightly put it by?

Dear, lay thine hand in mine once more,
In perfect trust of heart and mind;
Turn to the happier days before,
Leave we the darker hours behind.
From Life's dark Past new hopes are born,
The jarring discords slowly cease;
And through an ever-brightening morn
Sweet Love walks hand in hand with Peace.

R. S. W.

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CYCLING FOR HEALTH AND PLEASURE.

The pastime of cycling, at first only patronised by athletic youth, has now spread to every class of the community. The vast improvement in machines, and the health and exhilaration to be gained by the exercise, have had much to do with its popularity alike with aristocracy and democracy. Like golf, it has come to stay, although many who take cycling up for amusement will drop it again as they would do anything else. But there will always remain a strong and increasing contingent, fully aware, by practical experience, of its health and pleasure giving powers, who will place it second to no existing recreation. And so the cyclist awakens sleepy hamlets and moribund inns; listens to the musical monotony of many a hill burn and lowland stream; gets gleams and glances of beauty from many a nook and corner of the land, where railway, coach, or his unaided pedestrian powers would never carry him. It has widened a twenty-mile radius to a forty-mile radius, and increased his locomotive powers threefold. Let no one imagine that there is not a considerable amount of exertion and fatigue, and sometimes hardship. But it is of a wholesome kind, when kept within limits, and physically, morally, and socially, the benefits that cycling confers on the men of the present day are almost unbounded.

An enthusiastic journalist who had been burning the candle at both ends betook himself to the wheel, and found it of so much service to body and mind, that he straightway, in the columns of his newspaper, began to advise the whole world to learn the bicycle. He could hardly tell the difference it had made to his feelings and general health, and he knew of no exercise which brought so easily such a universal return in good health, good spirits, and amusement. Mr G. Lacy Hillier, of the Badminton volume on Cycling, confirms this. The cyclist seems to enter into the spirit of Emerson's saying as thoroughly as Thoreau might have done: 'Give me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of empires ridiculous.' Many overdo the exercise, then renounce it, or give it a bad name; others, by over-rapid riding in towns, make themselves public nuisances, and vastly increase the dangers of overcrowded streets. The sensible cyclist rides for health, increase of knowledge, and amusement.

Though Mr Ruskin was prepared once to spend all his best bad language in abusing the wheel, the world has gone its own mad way, and the careering multitudes in Battersea Park and elsewhere, on country and suburban roads, in crowded towns, have been the means of creating new manufactures, which have vastly benefited our home industries. Mr H. J. Lawson, inventor of the rear-driving safety, lately estimated the annual output of cycles at over a million, and the money spent at over ten millions. But in the absence of statistics this is only guess-work. The bicycle tax in France is said to yield not less than £80,000 a year. In the United States, where cycling has become a greater craze than with us, two hundred and fifty thousand cycles at least were purchased last year; this year more than four hundred thousand have changed hands. When the proposal was made some time ago to impose a tax on cycles, it was calculated that there were at least eight hundred thousand riders in the United Kingdom. The present season has witnessed quite a 'boom' in cycling and a great increase in the number of riders. Ladies have taken more rapidly to the pastime in America and France than in England. The rubber and then the pneumatic or inflated tyre have wrought a marvellous revolution; the high 'ordinary,' the tricycle, and the heavy 'solid,' and even the 'cushion,' have in most cases been relegated to the region of old iron. The Pneumatic Tyre Company, with a capital of between one and a half and two millions sterling, when in full swing, employs nearly one thousand hands, and can turn out twelve thousand tyres per week. Coventry, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, London, and other towns have largely benefited by the cycle trade.

Sir B. W. Richardson has often called attention to the benefit of cycling in the case of dwellers in towns. Dr Turner finds that nothing neutralises better the poison introduced into the blood through faulty digestion than gentle and continued exercise on the wheel. Mr A. J. Watson, the English amateur one-mile and five-mile champion in 1895, confessed that he never suffered from any ill effects, save perhaps during the hard days in winter, when prevented from riding. Dr Andrew Wilson once quoted a budget of correspondence from ladies who had tried the wheel, all of which was in the same direction, provided that overstrain was avoided. Where the heart is weak, cycling should be left alone. The muscles of the legs are developed and the circumference of the chest increased in the case of healthy riders.

Here are a few hints by a medical man: 'Never ride within half-an-hour of a meal, which means either before or after. Wheel the machine up any hill the mounting of which on the wheel causes any real effort. See that the clothing round the stomach, neck, and chest is loose. Have the handle-bar sufficiently raised to prevent stooping. Be as sparing as possible of taking fluids during a long ride. Except the wind, road, &c., be favourable, never ride more than ten miles an hour, unless for very short distances, and never smoke while riding.'

The cycle as we know it did not burst upon the world in all its present completeness, but has been a gradual evolution, the work of many a busy hand and brain, guided by experience. As far back as 1767 we find that Richard Lovell Edgeworth had something of the nature of a velocipede; and about the same date, William Murdoch, inventor of gas for illuminating purposes, had a wooden horse of his own invention upon which he rode to school at Cumnock. The Dandy Horse of 1818, the two wheels on which the rider sat astride, tipping the ground with his feet in order to propel the machine, was laughed out of existence.

In 1840, a blacksmith named Kirkpatrick Macmillan, of Courthill, parish of Keir, Dumfriesshire, made a cycle on which he rode to Glasgow, and caused a big sensation on the way. The notable fact regarding Macmillan's cycle is, that he had adapted cranks and levers on the old dandy or hobby-horse. Gavin Dalziel, of Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire, had a bicycle of his own invention in daily use in 1846. There was a revival of cycling between 1867-69. An ingenious Frenchman, M. Michaux, had some years before fitted pedals and a transverse handle to the front wheel of what came to be irreverently known as the 'bone-shaker.' This embryo bicycle had a considerable vogue, and was introduced to Mr Charles Spencer's gymnasium in London in 1868. Yet the bone-shaker craze might have died a natural death but for the introduction of the rubber tyre and other improvements. Mr James Starley, of Coventry, through whose inventive genius the tricycle was evolved from the bicycle, was also an improver and pioneer. In the 'Rover' bicycle he gave an impetus to the early history of the machine, which has been crowned in the pneumatic tyre, the invention of John Boyd Dunlop, born at Dreghorn, Ayrshire, in 1840. Mr Dunlop was engaged as a veterinary surgeon near Belfast, where he built himself an air-wheel from ordinary thin rubber sheets, with rubber valve and plug. Mr C. K. Welch followed with the detachable tyre.

Now there are hundreds of first-class machines from which to choose, and every important town has one or more agent. One sentiment will be echoed by every cyclist of experience, that an inferior bicycle is a costly investment—it costs much in trouble, annoyance, and repairs.

A cycling tour is health-giving and enjoyable when gone about rationally and prudently. It is pleasant to plan, and no less so to carry out, as it is always the unexpected which happens. There are halts by the wayside, conversations with rustics, fine views; and every part of the brain and blood is oxygenated, giving that kind of wholesome intoxication which Thoreau said he gained by living in the open air. One's own country is explored as it has never been explored before. Some wheelmen have been credited with seven and eight thousand miles in a single season. Others, more ambitious, have made a track round the globe. Mr Thomas Stevens, starting from San Francisco in April 1884, occupied three years in going round the world. Mr T. Allen and Mr L. Sachtleben, two American students, as a practical finish to a theoretical education, also occupied three years in riding round the world—15,044 miles on the wheel. They climbed Mount Ararat by the way, and interviewed Li Hung Chang, the Chinese viceroy. The wheel ridden by these 'foreign devils' was described by one Chinaman as 'a little mule that you drive by the ears, and kick in the sides to make him go.'

Mr Frank G. Lenz, who started from America in June 1892 to ride round the world, was unfortunately killed by six Kurds, sixty-five miles from Erzeroum, between the villages of Kurtali and Dahar, on May 10, 1894. There have been many interesting shorter rides. Mr Walter Goddard of Leeds, and Mr James Edmund of Brixton, started from London and rode entirely round Europe on wheels; Mr Hugh Callan rode from Glasgow to the river Jordan; Mr R. L. Jefferson, in 1894, rode from London to Constantinople, between March 10 and May 19. This year the same gentleman rode from London to Moscow, 4281 miles, and had nothing good to say of Russian inns or roads. A lady of sixty has done seventy miles in one day; while Miss Bacon, of the *Review of Reviews*, did twelve hundred miles in her various ups and downs between London and Glasgow during one holiday.

The lighter the machine, the more expensive it is. Racing-machines are built as light as twenty pounds in weight. Some of the swiftest road-riders patronise machines of twenty-six or twenty-seven pounds; but for all-round work, one of thirty-three pounds, without lamp or bell, is a good average machine. As to speed, we have had 460 miles in the twenty-four hours on the racing-track, and 377 miles on the road. Huret, a French rider, has done 515 miles between one midnight and another; the Swiss cyclist Lesna has done 28 miles an hour, while Mr Mills and Mr T. A. Edge, in their recent ride from Land's End to John o' Groats on a tandem, beat all previous records, doing the journey in three days, four hours, and forty-six minutes.

A very sensible American rider, when on tour, starts shortly after breakfast, and with a brief rest for lunch, has his day's work of about fifty miles over by four P.M. Then he changes underclothing—a most important and never-to-be-forgotten matter—has dinner, and an enjoyable ramble over the town or village where he stays over-night. But he is a luxurious dog, and not many will carry such an abundant kit in the triangular bag below the handle bar. Imagine three light outing shirts, three suits gauze underclothing, a dark flannel bicycle suit, laced tanned gaiters, light-weight rubber coat, comb; clothes, hair, and tooth brushes; soap and towel, writing-pad and pencil, map and matches, and tool bag! Many a cyclist carries a hand camera, and brings home a permanent record of his journeys.

It has been well said that many a boy will start in life with a more vigorous constitution because of the bicycle, and many a man who is growing old too fast by neglect of active exercise will find himself rejuvenated by the same agency. The doctors tell us that as long as one can ride with the mouth shut, the heart is all right. A fillip should be given to the appetite; whenever this is destroyed, and sleeplessness ensues, cycling is being overdone.

A word in closing about accidents, which are often due to carelessness and recklessness. A cyclist has no right to ride at ten or fourteen miles an hour in a crowded thoroughfare. He takes his life—and other people's!—in his hands if he does so. No less is caution needed on hills, the twists and turns in which are unseen or unfamiliar, and where the bottom of the incline cannot be seen. As the saying goes, 'Better be a coward for half-an-hour than a corpse for the rest of your lifetime.' But experience is the best guide, and no hard and fast rules can be laid down for exceptional circumstances.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XVIII.—THE SPREADING OF A NET.

'MY DEAR MR WYNYAN—Papa asks me to write and say that he is afraid you did not take his invitation seriously, for you have let three weeks pass since you were here last. He would so like a little informal chat with you. We are at home on Tuesdays, and we shall be so pleased to see you.—Very sincerely yours,
ISABEL ENDOZA.'

It had been a very cheerless time, and one hour Wynyan looked back upon the events connected with Robert Dalton's death as having taken place years ago; at another, they seemed to be as fresh as if they had only happened a day or two before. He had been quite a hermit ever since leaving the office, and it was only through Dr Kilpatrick that he knew anything about what had been going on in his little world.

His one way to smother the terrible feeling of disappointment from which he suffered was fighting a new battle in invention, and trying out of divers old nebulous notions to evolve something fresh and substantial. He had at last hit upon an idea which promised to become of value; but it was far yet from perfection; and the great difficulty was how to bring it to completion without placing himself under an obligation.

'Absurd!' cried the doctor one evening in the course of conversation. 'I've offered to advance what money you require as a friend.'

'But I wish to be independent, doctor.'

'Yes; you've grown into a curious fellow, Wynyan,' said Kilpatrick. 'When you are as old as I am, you will wake up to the fact that there is no such thing as independence. We are all depending upon each other more or less. Bah! I haven't patience with a man who lets a disappointment or two ruin his whole life. Why don't you call at South Audley Street?'

Wynyan started, and then said abruptly: 'Because I have no right to be there. I am only Robert Dalton's discharged servant.'

'Well, isn't a discharged servant a man, just the same as he was before he was discharged? Wynyan, I haven't patience with you. I'm sure Rénée likes you, and yet you stop away and leave her to the mercy of that fellow Brant. A man ought to be brave and strong and persistent in his love affairs. Look at animals, how they fight for the one they choose—look at gamecocks and stags and cattle, and—and—and'——

'Doctors!' suggested Wynyan dryly.

Dr Kilpatrick brought his fist down upon the table with a heavy bang, and his eyes flashed beneath his heavy brows.

'Confound you, sir!' he cried; 'that's a cowardly blow beneath the guard.'

'Nothing of the kind, doctor. Those who play at bowls—— You know the rest.—How is Miss Bryne?'

The doctor's angry look became piteous, and he sighed and became the weak man at once.

'Don't ask me,' he said with a groan. 'Poor woman: it's very terrible.'

'Infatuated as ever?'

'Worse my boy, worse. It makes my life a misery.'

'Time cures many troubles,' said Wynyan.

'Yes, my boy, it does, and everything comes to the man who waits. That's right enough when you're the right side of thirty; but when you're the wrong side of fifty, and the lady is—well, never mind—I don't exactly know her age; but it seems to me that if one has to wait very long—eh? You understand?'

'Yes, I understand,' said Wynyan.—'By the way, I have had a very warm invitation from the Count to visit there—to attend one of his friendly evenings.'

'Can you play a good game of chess? Because if so, go.'

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'Chess? I've no time for chess,' cried Wynyan impatiently.

'I meant life's chess, boy,' said the doctor, becoming strong again as soon as his *amour* was shelved. 'If you can, go and see them, and make the best of it. He wants you to do something for his confounded country.'

'Yes; he seems very patriotic.'

'Bah! There is hardly such a thing as a patriot. It generally means pelf, power, or place. Yes, go and see him. Make some money out of him if you can. Hay while the sun shines. He'll pitch you over as soon as he has got all he wants.'

'Then you'd go?'

'Certainly,' said the doctor, as a thought occurred to him. 'A man like you has no business to shut himself up.'

The doctor said no more, but his few words had weight enough to send his visitor to the Count's on the appointed night, for Wynyan's mind was in the balance.

There were only three or four people in Villar Endoza's *salon*, and upon Wynyan's name being announced, his reception from father and daughter was paternal and affectionate.

'So very glad, my dear Wynyan,' said the Count.

'At last,' said Isabel with a reproachful look. 'I have been trying so hard to think out what we could have done to offend you.'

'What nonsense!' said Wynyan, as he sat down upon the *vis-à-vis* near his young hostess. 'You forget that I am a busy man, and not much given to society.'

'But you need not neglect your friends,' she said with a slight pout, and a look that would have made some men's pulses stir.

At that moment Endoza came up, and gave his daughter a hint to go and talk to one of their guests.

'He fancies he is being neglected,' said the Count apologetically to Wynyan; 'and he is very old.'

'I shall soon be back, Mr Wynyan,' said Isabel with another smile and look, before she glided off, with the Count watching her pensively, his hand upon Wynyan's arm, and his head on one side.

'I ought to be a happy man, Wynyan, with such a child. She makes my life here bearable amidst all my troubles and anxieties.'

'I suppose you do have a very busy time,' said Wynyan.

'Hardly an hour to call my own. You see I am heart and soul with the President in his intense love of our country. Almost his last words to me were: "Endoza, our land is small, but we will make it great. Work with me, and we will have the republic honoured among nations!"'

'A most worthy desire.'

'Is it not, sir? Well, we have done much, but we will do more -I say *we*, because I fancy that I can claim to have done a little.'

'Of course,' said Wynyan. 'I remember how you worked about the arrangements for the electric lighting of your capital.'

'Yes. Add to it my troubles of the line of mountain railway.'

'And that has succeeded?'

'It is a triumph, sir,' cried the Count enthusiastically. 'Then the docks at our principal port are rapidly being completed: good roads are opening up the country; our postal service is still wanting, but wonderfully improved, and the telegraph is gradually spreading to the extreme point. Now we are striving hard to raise the status of our navy.'

'You must be spending large sums!'

'Yes; but what matter? As our President says, our credit is good; there is no difficulty about a loan, and the riches of the country are being developed. It is a wonderful country, Mr Wynyan. The mining wealth is prodigious, and the capitalists are coming in to assist in its development. Several English companies have been formed and are doing marvellously well. Ah! it is a glorious country, my dear Wynyan: eternal sunshine, a delicious climate, a smiling land. All we want is enterprise and brains. We want young men of genius to come to our help. We can give them the heartiest welcome, the highest rewards and positions, such as they can never win amongst your fogs. You, of course, are settled and prosperous here, otherwise what a position I could offer you as an engineer. For instance, there is our navy.'

'But I am not a shipbuilder, sir,' said the young man, smiling.

'No,' said the Count, taking his visitor by the coat lapel, 'we have shipbuilders; but ships must have motive power.'

Wynyan started slightly.

'It seems to me, my dear sir, that the days of steam are numbered. We are ambitious—we desire that our vessels shall surpass those of the rest of the world, and we would give to the man who could come and endow the great monsters we build with life and power, everything he liked to demand. It would be a grand future, sir, for such an individual. Do you know any such man with the requisite brains?'

Wynyan was silent.

'Ah! you think. Do so, my dear Wynyan: you would be helping me greatly; but he must be what you call clever—very clever.'

'Yes, he must have brains, sir,' said Wynyan, with his brow growing knotty.

'And for reward, wealth, honour, and a home in a lovely country, the adoration of our people, and perhaps the smiles of a high-born, beautiful wife. My dear Wynyan, is not that a prospect for a clever, ambitious young man?'

'Yes, a grand prospect, sir.'

'Ah! if you had been free, and I could have tempted you to join heart and soul with us!'

He ceased speaking, and Wynyan stood gazing into the past, where all was black, and then into the future, where all might be bright. Why should he not seize the bait? It could not, he knew, be all that the Count had said; but it was an opportunity such as might never occur again. Here there seemed to be no chance whatever; there he could for certain make his way. And what did he say—a motor for their navy? Then, too, what home had he? Why should he stay in England, eating out his heart in despair, while Brant rose to affluence? The temptation was strong, and just then he found Isabel's eyes fixed upon him, and her face lit up as she caught his glance.

'Take the good the gods provide you,' he involuntarily quoted, and at the moment the door opened, and the servant announced: 'Miss Bryne, Miss Dalton, and Mr Brant Dalton.'

THE CARRYING-TRADE OF THE WORLD.

Of all the industries of the world, that which is concerned with the interchange of the products of nations is suffused with the most interest for the largest number of people. Not only is the number of those who go down into the sea in ships, and who do business on the great waters, legion, but three-fourths of the population of the globe are more or less dependent on their enterprise. The ocean-carrying trade we are accustomed to date from the time of the Phœnicians; and certainly the Phœnicians were daring mariners, if not exactly scientific navigators, and their ships were pretty well acquainted with the waters of Europe and the coasts of Africa. But the Phœnicians were rather merchant-adventurers on their own account than ocean-carriers, as, for instance, the Arabians were on the other side of Africa, acting as the intermediaries of the trade between Egypt and East Africa and India. In the early days, too, there is reason to believe that the Chinese were extensive ocean-carriers, sending their junks both to the Arabian Gulf and to the ports of Hindustan, long before Alexander the Great invaded India. But there is nothing more remarkable in the history of maritime commerce than the manner in which it has changed hands.

Even down to the beginning of the present century, almost the whole of the carrying-trade of the Baltic and the Mediterranean was in the hands of the Danes, Norwegians, and Germans, while our own harbours were crowded with foreign ships. This was one of the effects of our peculiar Navigation Laws, under which they were so protected that there was hardly a trade open to British vessels. It is, indeed, just ninety years since British ship-owners made a formal and earnest appeal to the Government to remove the existing shackles on the foreign trade of the country, and to promote the development of commerce with the American and West Indian colonies. One argument of the time was the necessity for recovering and developing the Mediterranean trade, as affording one of the best avenues for the employment of shipping and the promotion of international commerce. It was a trade of which England had a very considerable share in the time of Henry VII., who may very fairly be regarded as the founder of British merchant shipping. He not only built ships for himself for trading purposes, but encouraged others to do so, and even lent them money for the purpose. And it was to the Mediterranean that he chiefly directed his attention, in eager competition with the argosies of Venice and Genoa. There resulted a perfect fleet of what were called 'tall ships' engaged in carrying woollen fabrics and other British products to Italy, Sicily, Syria, and the Levant, and in bringing home cargoes of silk, cotton, wool, carpets, oil, spices, and wine.

Steam has worked a change in favour of this country nowhere more remarkably than in the Mediterranean trade. When the trade began to revive for sailing-vessels, by a removal of some of the irksome restrictions, Lisbon was the most important port on the Iberian Peninsula for British shipping. There was a weekly mail service by sailing-packets between Falmouth and Lisbon, until the Admiralty put on a steamer. Some time in the 'thirties,' two young Scotchmen named Brodie Willcox and Arthur Anderson, had a small fleet of sailing-vessels engaged in the Peninsular trade, and about the year 1834 they chartered the steamer *Royal Tar* from the Dublin and London Steam-packet Company. This was the beginning of the great Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, destined to revolutionise the carrying-trade both of the Mediterranean and the East. When the Spanish Government negotiated for a line of steamers to be established between England and Spain, Willcox and Anderson took up the project, organised a small company, and acquired some steamers, which at first did not pay. They persevered, however, until shippers saw the superiority of the new vessels to the old sailers, and at last the Peninsular Company obtained the first mail-contract ever entered into by the English Government. This was in 1837; and the Cunard and Royal Mail (West Indian) lines were not established until 1840. In a couple of years the Peninsular Company extended their line through the Straits to Malta and Alexandria, and again to Corfu and the Levant. In 1840 they applied for and obtained a charter as the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, with the object of establishing a line of steamers on the other side of the Isthmus of Suez, from which have developed the great ramifications to India, China, Japan, the Straits Settlements, and Australia. It was, indeed, through the Mediterranean that we obtained our first hold on the Eastern carrying-trade.

In considering the development of maritime commerce, it is always to be remembered that the design of Columbus and the early navigators in sailing westwards was not to find America, but to find a new way to India and Far Cathay. Mighty as America has become in the world's economy, its first occupation was only an incident in the struggle for the trade of the Far East. But with the occupation of America came two new developments in this carrying-trade—namely, one across the Atlantic, and one upon and across the Pacific. To the eventful year in which so many great enterprises were founded—namely, 1840—we trace the beginning of steam-carrying on the Pacific, for in that year William Wheelwright took or sent the first steamer round Cape Horn, as the pioneer of the great Pacific Steam Navigation Company. Within about a dozen years thereafter, the Americans had some fifty steamers constantly engaged on the Pacific coasts of the two Continents besides those of the English company. Out of one of those Pacific lines grew Commodore Vanderbilt's Nicaragua Transit Company, a double service of two lines of steamers, one on each side of the Continent, with an overland connection through Nicaragua. Out of another grew the New York and San Francisco line, connecting overland across the Isthmus of Panama—where M. de Lesseps did *not* succeed in cutting a Canal. And out of yet another of these Pacific enterprises, all stimulated by Wheelwright's success, grew in the course of years a line between San Francisco and Hawaii, and another between San Francisco and Australia. Some forty years ago the boats of this last-named line used to run down to Panama to pick up passengers and traffic from Europe, and it is interesting to recall that at that period the design was greatly favoured of a regular steam service between England and Australia *viâ* Panama. A company was projected for the purpose; but it came to nothing, for various reasons not necessary to enter upon here. But as long ago as the early fifties, when the Panama Railway was in course of construction, there were eight separate lines of steamers on the Atlantic meeting at Aspinwall, and five on the Pacific meeting at Panama. Later on, when the Americans had completed their iron-roads from ocean to ocean across their own dominions, they started lines of steamers from San Francisco to China and Japan. And later still, when the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed across Canada, a British line of ships was started across the Pacific to Far Cathay. So that the dream of the old navigators has, after all, been practically realised.

The repeal of the corn-laws gave an immense impetus to British shipping, by opening up new lines of traffic in grain with the ports of the Baltic, the Black Sea, and Egypt; and the extension of steamer communication created another new carrying-business in the transport of coals abroad to innumerable coaling-stations. Thus demand goes on creating supply, and supply in turn creating new demand.

From the old fruit and grain sailers of the Mediterranean trade have developed such extensive concerns as the Cunard line (one of whose beginnings was a service of steamers between Liverpool and Havre), which now covers the whole Mediterranean, and extends across the Atlantic to New York and Boston; the Anchor line, which began with a couple of boats running between the Clyde and the Peninsula, and now covers all the Mediterranean and Adriatic, and extends from India to America; the Bibby line, which began with a steamer between Liverpool and Marseilles, and now covers every part of the Mediterranean (Leyland line), and spreads out to Burma and the Straits. These are but a few of many examples of how the great carrying-lines of the world, east and west, have developed from modest enterprises in mid-Europe. And even now the goods traffic between the Mediterranean and the United Kingdom, North Europe and America, is less in the hands of these great lines than in that of the vast fleets of ocean tramps, both sail and steam.

One of the most wonderful developments in the carrying-trade of the world is the concern known as the Messageries Maritimes of France—now probably the largest steamer-owning copartnery in the world. Prior to the Crimean War, there was an enterprise called the Messageries Impériales, which was engaged in the land-carriage of mails through France. In 1851 this company entered into a contract with the French Government for the conveyance of mails to Italy, Egypt, Greece, and the Levant; and as years went on, the mail subsidies became so heavy that the enterprise was practically a national one. During the war, the Messageries Company's vessels were in such demand as transports, &c., that the company had to rapidly create a new fleet for mail purposes. With peace came the difficulty of employing the enormously augmented fleet. New lines of mail and cargo boats were therefore successively established between France and the Danube and Black Sea; Bordeaux and Brazil and the River Plate; Marseilles and India and China, &c. In fact, the Messageries Company's ramifications now extend from France to Great Britain, South America, the whole of the Mediterranean, the Levant, the Black Sea, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and the China Seas, and the South Pacific.

Few people, perhaps, have any conception of the numbers of regular and highly organised lines of steamers now connecting Europe and America. Besides the Messageries, the Austro-Hungarian Lloyd's and the Italian mail lines run between the Mediterranean and the River Plate. Argentina and Brazil are connected with different parts of Europe by about a dozen lines. Between the United States and Europe there are now about thirty distinct regular lines of steamers carrying goods and passengers; and about a dozen more carrying goods only. Four of these lines are direct with Germany, two with France, two with Holland, two with Belgium, one with Denmark, and two with Italy, one of which is under the British flag. All the rest of the passenger lines and most of the cargo lines run between the United Kingdom and the United States. As for the 'tramps' steaming and sailing between North America and Europe, they are of all nations; but again the majority fly the British flag, though once upon a time the American-built clippers, of graceful lines and 'sky-scraping' masts, used to monopolise the Atlantic carrying-trade under the stars and stripes. Once upon a time, too, these beautiful American clippers had the bulk of the China tea-trade, and of the Anglo-Australian general trade. But they were run off the face of the waters by the Navigation Laws of America and the shipping enterprise of Britain. The great and growing trade between the United States and India, too, is now nearly all carried in British vessels; and a large part of the regular steam service between New York and the West Indies is under the British flag. That a change will take place when America follows the advice of President Cleveland, and repeals the laws which forbid

Americans to own vessels built abroad or manned by foreigners, is pretty certain.

With regard to India, the growth in the carrying-trade has been enormous since Vasco da Gama, four hundred years ago, found his way round the Cape of Good Hope to Calicut. For an entire century, down to 1600, the Portuguese monopolised the trade of the East, and as many as two and three hundred of their ships would often be gathered together in the port of Goa, taking in cargo for different Eastern and European ports. To-day, Goa is a deserted port, and the Portuguese flag is rarely seen—a ship or two per annum now being sufficient for all the trade between Portugal and India. In the century of Portuguese prosperity the English flag was hardly known in Eastern waters. It was the Dutch who drove out the Portuguese; and the reason why the Dutch were tempted out to India was because the rich cargoes brought home by the Portuguese could not be disposed of in Portugal, and had to be taken to Amsterdam, or Rotterdam, or Antwerp, where the opulent Dutch merchants purchased them for re-distribution throughout Europe. This is how the Dutch came into direct relations with the Indian trade before the English, and why Barentz and others tried to find a near way to India for the Dutch vessels by way of the north of Europe and Asia. Failing in the north, the Dutch followed the Portuguese round the Cape, and reaching Sumatra, founded the wide dominion of Netherlands-India. This occupation was effected before 1600; and between that year and 1670 they expelled the Portuguese from every part of the Eastern Archipelago, from Malacca, from Ceylon, from the Malabar Coast, and from Macassar.

The Dutch in turn enjoyed a monopoly of the Indian trade for about a hundred years. Then with the rise of Clive came the downfall of the Dutch, and by 1811 they were stripped of every possession they had in the East. Later, we gave them back Java and Sumatra, with which Holland now does a large trade, reserved exclusively to Dutch vessels. But in Hindustan the Dutch have not a single possession, and it is doubtful if in all the Indian Peninsula there are now a hundred Dutchmen resident.

Two immense streams of trade are constantly setting to and from India and Europe through the Suez Canal and round the Cape. Not only is the bulk of that trade conducted by the well-known Peninsular and Oriental, British India, City, Clan, Anchor, and other lines (though the Messageries Maritimes, North German Lloyd's, and other foreign lines have no mean share), but the whole coast-line of India is served by the steamers of the British-India and Asiatic lines; and British vessels conduct the most of the carrying-trade between India and Australia, China, Japan, the Straits, Mauritius, &c.

A new carrying-trade was created when the Australasian colonies were founded one after the other—in the taking out of home manufactures, implements, machinery, &c., and bringing back wool and tallow; and then gold, wheat, fruit, and frozen meat. This colonial trade is now divided between sailers and steamers, and in the steamer traffic some of the foreign lines are eagerly bidding for a share. Similarly, a new carrying-trade has been of quite recent years developed by the opening up of South Africa, and this is practically all in British hands.

An important item of international carriage of recent development is the mineral oil of America and Russia. The carriage of these oils is a trade of itself. Another special branch of the world's carrying-trade is connected with the sea-fisheries. All the fishing-grounds of the Atlantic and North Sea may be said to be now connected with the consuming markets by services of steamers. The cod-fishers off the Banks of Newfoundland transfer their dried and salted fish to vessels which speed them to the good Catholics of Spain and France and Italy, just as the steam auxiliaries bring to London the harvests gathered by the boats on the Dogger Bank.

It is computed that on the great ocean highways there are not fewer than ten thousand large and high-powered steamers constantly employed. If it be wondered how sailing-vessels can maintain a place at all in the race of competition in the world's carrying-trade, a word of explanation may be offered. Do not suppose that only rough and low-valued cargo is left for the sailers. They still have the bulk of the cotton and wheat and other valuable products, not only because they can carry more cheaply, but because transport by sailing-vessels gives the merchant a wider choice of market. Cargoes of staple products can always be sold 'to arrive' at some given port, and it is cheaper to put them afloat than to warehouse them ashore and wait for an order.

What, then, are the proportions borne by the several maritime nations in this great international carrying-trade? The question is not one which can be answered with absolute precision, but the tables of the Marine Department of the Board of Trade enable one to find an approximate answer. The latest return, published in 1894, contains the statistics (for the most part) down to 1893, which is sufficiently recent. In that year the tonnage of steam and sailing vessels of all nationalities in the foreign trade entering and clearing at ports in the United Kingdom was 74,632,847, of which 54,148,664 tons were British, and 20,484,183 tons were foreign. In the foreign total, the largest proportions were Norwegian, 5,013,533 tons; German, 3,789,702 tons; Dutch, 2,155,707 tons; Swedish, 1,848,856 tons; Danish, 1,772,837 tons; and French, 1,787,538 tons. The Teutonic races have thus the most of the ocean-carrying; the United States proportion of the above total was only 464,468 tons.

So far the United Kingdom. Now let us see what part British shipping plays in the foreign trade of other countries. In Russia-in-Europe the entrances and clearances were 9,319,806 tons—of which 48·2 per cent. was British; Norway, total 5,775,203 tons—British proportion, 12·7 per cent.; Sweden, 11,446,173 tons—British proportion, 19·1 per cent.; Germany, 22,405,872 tons—British proportion, 36·4 per cent.; Holland, 11,845,875 tons—British proportion, 50·2 per cent.; France, 28,120,524 tons—British proportion, 44·6 per cent.; Portugal, 11,082,049 tons—British proportion, 51·0 per cent.; Italy, 13,943,927 tons—British proportion, 43·6 per cent.; United States, 33,504,271 tons—British proportion, 51·6 per cent. (Some of the above figures refer to 1892, but are the latest available.)

Not to multiply dry statistics, however, we will give the total tonnage of merchant vessels (steam and sail) belonging to the British Empire in 1893, the figures being the net tonnage of the Board of Trade, not the gross tonnage of Lloyd's Register, which comes out considerably more:

	Tons.
United Kingdom	8,778,503
Canada and Newfoundland	985,759
Australasia	365,058
British India and Ceylon	65,413
Other British Possessions	170,834
Total tonnage of British Empire	10,365,567

Let us now, for comparison, give the total tonnage of the merchant navies (steam and sail) of the principal maritime countries of the world:

	Tons.
Russia (estimate)	500,000
Finland	257,854
Norway	1,744,993
Sweden	548,711
Denmark	318,837
Germany	1,511,579
Holland	292,763
Belgium	70,395
France	905,606
Italy	811,264
Austria-Hungary	196,647
Greece	311,550
United States (oversea trade)	899,803
" " (lake and river trade)	3,925,268
Total	12,295,270

Roughly speaking, then, the British Empire owns about five-elevenths of the entire shipping of the world. Even so recently as thirty years ago, about two-thirds of the ocean-carrying trade was performed by sailing-vessels; to-day, about four-fifths of it is performed by steamers.

A DEPARTURE FROM TRADITION.

CHAPTER II.

I SHALL never forget the graphic descriptive power my cook betrayed when she told me about the black beetles. The very simplicity of her language and the directness of her thought made me feel as if the horrid things were crawling slowly up my back. I am not interested in zoology, and I flew out and consulted Charles, the groom, who prides himself on his veterinary arts. I don't know what was done. I thought it safer not to ask. Then, no sooner did the beetles sink into oblivion, than it appeared that the kitchen swarmed with mice, and that a particularly powerful-looking one had sent the kitchen-maid into hysterics. I again consulted Charles, and he suggested a cat; so, when I was passing through the village, I told the postmistress that I would give any child a shilling who would bring me a fine healthy kitten. The following day was Saturday, and there was a meet at Sir Patrick Christie's. The weather was perfect, and we found almost immediately, and had a glorious run. On the way home, spattered and weary and hungry, I suddenly nearly jumped out of my saddle, and an emphatic expression rose to my lips. I had completely forgotten to order the dinner!

All the way back I was hot and cold with misery and anxiety. What might not have happened in my absence? Had that stout cook been kind, and risen to the occasion? Or had she—horrors!—sent up to my wife? Or had she simply taken no steps whatever, and should we sit down to flowers and salt and dinner-rolls?

When I got home I slunk into the back premises, avoiding the half-opened drawing-room door. I found James in the pantry cleaning knives and whistling—happy dog! I would rather it had been one of the maids; but I was desperate.

'James,' I whispered, 'what has cook done, do you know?'

James grinned. 'She's egsiting herself, sir.'

'Yes, yes, I daresay!—But she has managed somehow, I suppose?'

'She says, sir, she ain't agoing to give 'em nothink, not if they starves, sir!'

I squared my shoulders. 'You need not repeat what cook allowed herself to remark in the privacy of the kitchen,' I told him sternly. —'Has she actually cooked no food?'

James stared at me. 'Well, sir, we could 'ardly expect 'er for to *cook* anythink, sir, under the circumstances, sir; but Mary—she's a tender-'earted gal, Mary—she *did* make bold to ask a drop o' milk.'

'Milk!' I ejaculated.

'Yessir. Mary said, sir, says she, being so young, sir, says she, and none o' their fault, it go to 'er 'eart for to 'ear 'em squeak.'

'Enough of this, James!' I cried angrily. 'This is not the way to speak of your mistress and myself. I will see cook.'

'I don't rightly understand you, sir, axin' yer pardon, but I warn't speaking of the missus and you, sir. But I wouldn't go a-near cook, sir, not if I was you—no, I wouldn't! She says you've done it o' purpose to plague 'er. She's in a orful way along of them cats,' he added confidentially.

'Cats? What cats?'

'Why, sir, *that's* what I've been a-telling you of. I thought as you was axin'.'

'What cats?' I repeated, a growing disquiet creeping over me.

'Why, the cats as you sent in from the village, sir! Twenty-one 'as arrived, and they be still coming, all sizes. Ten tabbies, sir, nothink to speak of; two whites, sir, which I 'ear is generally deaf; five black as soot, sir; two sandy, and one tortoiseshell as is wuth keeping. Cook's egsited.'

The dinner paled by comparison. Beetles, mice, cats! It was as bad as the plagues of Egypt. I went up and tubbed and changed. The dinner was excellent, and I gave orders that every child should be sent for, and given another shilling to claim and take away its own animal. The whole transaction cost me two pounds nine. In the long-run I fancy it must have cost me considerably more, for the kitten we retained, though it was of a very tender age, regaled itself on beef and mutton, several roast ducks, bottled beer, ham and eggs, cold game, fresh butter, Stilton cheese, crystallised ginger, green tea, and cognac. Besides being so unblushingly omnivorous, it broke a good deal of crockery, a Venetian glass decanter, and a piece of valuable Sèvres; and it was also guilty of denting the silver urn by falling heavily against it.

The next plague that visited me was the monthly bills at the beginning of November. The cook had managed the orders to the tradespeople, and now they all sent in little account-books. I added up the totals on a bit of blotting-paper after I had made out the cheques. Then I multiplied that by twelve, and added what my horse and man cost me, and what my tailor cost me, and double what my tailor cost me for what my wife's dress would probably come to when her trousseau was worn out; and then I put down the servants' wages, and a good round sum for a holiday, and then I added it all up. It came to exactly a hundred pounds more than my annual income. I halved my wife's dress allowance, and was just going to add it all up again, when a host of other expenses crowded in on my memory—cabs, my club, theatre tickets, doctor's bill. I felt so depressed that Edith noticed my wan looks.

'I—I'm not sleeping very well, dear,' I said. This was perfectly true: I had so much to think of at night.

'Dear me!' she cried, opening her gray eyes. 'Neither am I! I have been working too hard, I think. We must both have a change soon.'

Alas, poor girl! She was all unconscious that ruin stared us in the face. I gazed at her sorrowfully. She was *not* looking well—dark rings encircled her eyes, and she was pale and thin.

'You are overworking yourself,' I said with sudden conviction.

She laughed nervously. 'Well, perhaps I am,' she owned.

That night, a fork dropped from my nerveless hand, and fell with a clang. Edith started and screamed.

'Your nerves are overwrought,' I told her.

Half an hour later, she dropped her coffee spoon into the fender. I bounded off my chair.

'Why, you have nerves too, Harry!' she exclaimed. 'Are you smoking too much?'

We had in the local man to see us both, and he spoke to me seriously about letting Edith work so hard.

'She is a delicate, highly strung organism,' he said sternly; 'and I warn you that if we don't take care, we shall have her on our hands with a nervous fever. She tells me she works six hours a day. That must be put a stop to at once. I shall prescribe a tonic; but she must have complete rest.'

I felt very dispirited. The medical man evidently blamed me, and I was too weak and crushed to complain.

My wife obeyed the doctor for some days; but the result was disastrous to me. She went about the house and noticed things. She had a way of touching furniture and books with her handkerchief, and of course the dust came off. Then she sighed and looked at me. I took no notice. It was most interfering.

It was about this time that my cook gave me warning. I ran up-stairs and told Edith.

'You'll have to get another,' she said calmly.

I felt sick and faint.

'And I think you had better dismiss Jane the housemaid too,' she went on. 'The house is getting very dirty.'

'I fancy you had better leave that to me, my dear,' I remarked with some asperity. 'And may I ask you how you come to know that the housemaid's name is Jane?'

About a week after this, Lady Christie sent a note to say that she heard we were looking for a cook, and that hers was leaving her, and that she could send her to be interviewed. Lady Christie wrote to my wife: people cling to these old-fashioned prejudices, and seem to think that it must necessarily be the lady of the house who looks after domestic matters.

That evening the cook came. My wife remained in the room, at my request, and busied herself with a newspaper. The woman brought her umbrella in with her, and stood in the middle of the floor.

'Oh—ah! Good-evening!' I said.

'Good-evening, sir.'

'Won't you take a seat?' I asked, wheeling forward an armchair.

My wife rustled a newspaper.

The woman preferred to stand, so I stood too—first on one foot and then on the other—for I couldn't think what the dickens I should say to her next.

Suddenly I had a brilliant inspiration. 'Do you wear pink cotton dresses in the morning?' I asked.

'Henry!' my wife exclaimed, looking over the top of her newspaper.

'Er—er—can you cook a steak without letting the gravy run out?' I hastily went on.

The woman seemed to think she could.

'Well, I think you will suit,' I told her.

'Wages, reason of leaving, age, church, length of character, parentage,' prompted a voice from behind the newspaper.

The woman said she did not think the situation would suit her, and she went away.

My wife was curiously put out, and audibly wondered what Lady Christie would think. I made up my mind to have a list of questions written out before I interviewed another, and to take down the answers in writing.

Next day the housemaid gave warning. I was terribly upset. I could scarcely eat a crumb all day, and I lay awake from two until ten. My wife noticed my pallid visage when I came down to breakfast. I had somehow run short of coals, and we had no fires in the house that day, and nothing could be cooked. We neither of us had much appetite, so it didn't really matter. Also Mary was ill, I was told; and Jane waited on us. Her boots creaked; and, in the state Edith's and my nerves were in, we could not stand that. I wrote for coals, and sent James for the doctor, and then I went to my smoking-room and sat looking at the cigar ends lying in among yesterday's ashes in the fender; and thought over the position. Perhaps it was the cigar ends, or perhaps the odour of stale smoke, or perhaps it was the intervention of my good angel, but suddenly George Seton came into my mind, and hope entered my heart.

I found my wife walking up and down the library to keep warm. The dust had gathered on her books and papers since she had been idle.

'Edith,' I said, 'I find I shall have to run up to town this afternoon to see about servants.'

'Very well,' she replied listlessly.

Then I walked to the station and wired to George: 'In a difficulty. Dine with me at the club to-night.'

It wasn't till after the train had fairly started that I remembered I had wired the identical words George had used to me the night before my marriage. Ah, well! How strangely things come round!

George dined with me at the club. We had a cosy little dinner: it was quite like old times. Afterwards, we lit our pipes. It was difficult to tell George all about it—he would laugh. He laughed till I thought he would choke, and then he asked me to let him think it over, and he would breakfast with me next morning at my hotel, and give me the results of his reflections. George has a good strong chin; and, though he is not a married man, it is not always married men who understand women the best. In fact, I sometimes fancy that men who understand women the best remain unmarried. Anyway, after I had put my brief into George's hands, I somehow felt a great weight off my mind.

I returned home in the course of the morning.

'Have you found servants?' was my wife's first question.

'No,' I replied; 'I have not.'

'Then what are you going to do, Harry? You really must bestir yourself! It is only a fortnight now till they leave, and several people are asked to dine here on the 27th, and I'm sure'—— Edith had grown a trifle irritable in these days. It was a good sign.

'My dear,' I said to her, 'I am not going to engage servants. I find that they are completely old-fashioned, and that we are behind the time in submitting to this obsolete custom. Now, whatever else people may say of us, they cannot say that we are behind the time, or that obsolete customs find consideration at our hands.'

'No,' my wife agreed. Did I detect a tinge of regret in her tone?

'I find that in London most up-to-date people live on the co-operative system. We can't manage this, living, as we do, in the country. Our houses are not adapted for modern ideas. There is a kitchen, several pantries—a whole suite of rooms dedicated to the service of pampered menials, who eat our bread and take our money, and whose slaves we are.'

Edith looked impressed. I felt I had done well—it was almost word for word what George had jotted down for me.

'And so,' I went on, gaining courage and dignity, 'I intend adopting another expedient, which many of my friends have had recourse to with infinite success. I am going to dismiss all our servants, and employ lady-helps.'

'Oh!' said my wife.

'I—I have seen one or two already,' I went on, blushing at the fib, for I am a truthful man.

My wife mistook my faltering tones. 'What were they like?' she asked.

'They were simply charming.'

'Oh!—But would they—do the work?'

'Ah, well,' I replied evasively, 'one leaves that to them, you know.'

'How do they dress?'

'I am not good at describing dress,' I replied, 'but I think they wear—well, the sort of thing you have got on.'

'Nonsense, Harry!' said my wife sharply; and, looking at her, I became aware she had on some sort of morning robe, with a profusion of lace and ribbons.

'Would they—dine with us?'

'Edith,' I said, with an assumption of sternness, 'if you for a moment suppose that I should permit any gently nurtured lady to feel herself slighted in this house, or to be shown even the negative discourtesy implied by'——

'Don't be silly!—how can a woman cook the dinner and eat it at one and the same time?'

'A clever woman is capable of anything. I am told it is wonderful how these lady-helps adapt themselves—how they get through their arduous domestic tasks, and yet appear always at leisure. The household matters move on oiled wheels, and one is never made aware of any haste or disquiet. It is a wonderful gift that some women have. The lady I saw seemed very well read, by the way. She told me she was a Browningite. I thought it would be so companionable for you, dear. But she was very interested in cookery too, so I shan't be left quite out in the cold.'

My wife's gray eyes opened to their extreme limit. She played with her rings nervously. 'How many would you employ?' she asked presently.

'About six,' I said, at random.

My wife got up from the table and stood by me on the hearthrug. 'We—we should have no—no—time to ourselves,' she murmured, in a quivering voice.

'Neither do we under the old yoke of servants.'

'Six lady-helps!—Wouldn't they—wouldn't they rather wonder that I didn't—I mean—they might think that I ought'——

'So do the servants,' I said grimly.

There was a long pause, then I got up. 'I will telegraph to them all to-day,' I said, with a business-like promptness.

My wife flung herself into my arms. 'Harry!' she sobbed, 'Harry, Harry *dear!* I couldn't b—b—bear it! Give me the keys!'

. . . .

When George Seton came to stay with us at Christmas, ours was the most charming house in all England, and my wife the best housekeeper in the world.

CROWNS ANCIENT AND MODERN.

It may interest the studious in the art of heraldry to trace the gradual development of Crowns, from the crude and curious fillet of metals, and garlands made with branches or leaves of plants and trees, to be met with among the records of ancient history and the middle ages, to the gorgeous and costly 'state crowns,' resplendent in gold and precious jewels, worn by the kings and queens of modern times.

The first mention of such ornaments comes to us from Scripture, and their use seems to have been very common among the Hebrews. According to Holy Writ, the high-priest was accustomed, on occasions of great solemnity, to wear a 'crown' composed of a fillet or band of gold or silver placed upon the forehead, and tied with a ribbon of a hyacinth or azure-blue colour; and even private priests and common Israelites must have been in the habit of wearing, on certain days, some sort of ornamental head-work, since God commanded Ezekiel 'not to take off his crown, nor assume the marks of one in mourning.' The construction of these early crowns we read about appears to have been exceedingly simple—practically nothing more or less than bandlets drawn round the head and tied behind, as we still see it represented on medals and old coins round the heads of Jupiter, the Ptolemies, and kings of Syria. Afterwards, they consisted of two bandlets; and then, by degrees, branches of various kinds of trees were introduced; and woods and groves were ransacked for different sorts of wood and plants for decorating the statues and images of their gods, and for the service of kings and emperors, and the sacrifices of the priests.

Among the Greeks, the crowns given to those who carried off the prizes at the Isthmian Games were made of pinewood; at the Olympian festivities, of laurel; and at the Nemæan celebrations, of smallage. The Roman emperors had four kinds of crowns, emblematic of their royal dignity and sovereign power—namely, a crown of laurels; a radial or radiating crown; a crown adorned with pearls and precious stones; and a kind of bonnet or cap something similar to the mortier. In Constantine's time, the fillet of pearls came into general use, which the later Byzantine emperors turned into a coronet. It was originally only a band of gold, and then transformed into a garland, and subsequently into stuff adorned with pearls. Manuel Palæologus, crowned in 1363, wore a close-fitting crown studded with pearls. The Romans had also various kinds of crowns which they distributed as rewards for martial exploits and extraordinary services on behalf of the Republic: (1) the Oval Crown, made of myrtle, and bestowed upon generals who were entitled to the honours of the 'lesser triumph,' called Ovation. (2) The Naval or Rostral Crown, composed of a circle of gold with ornaments representing 'beaks' of ships, and given to the captain who first grappled, or the soldier who first boarded, an enemy's ship. (3) The crown known in Latin as 'Vallaris Castrensis,' a circle of gold raised with jewels or palisades, the reward of the general who first forced the enemy's intrenchments. (4) The Mural Crown, a circle of gold indented and embattled, given to the warrior who first mounted the wall of a besieged place, and successfully lodged a standard or flag thereon. (5) The Civic Crown (made of the branch of a green oak), a garland of oak leaves, bestowed upon a Roman soldier who had saved the life of a citizen. (6) The Triumphal Crown, consisting at first of wreaths of laurel, but afterwards, made of gold—the reward of such generals as had the good fortune to be successful in battle. (7) The crown called 'Obsidionalis' or 'Graminea,' made of the 'common grass' found growing on the scene of action, and bestowed only for the deliverance of an army when reduced to the last extremity. This was esteemed the highest military reward among the Roman soldiery. Athletic crowns and crowns of laurel, destined as rewards at public games, and many other kinds of crowns for use in various Roman sports, are frequently found mentioned in the annals of Roman history.

Examples of some of these crowns are constantly met with in modern achievements; for instance, the mural crown in the case of Lord Montford, which was conferred on Sir John Bromley, one of his lordship's ancestors, as an augmentation to his arms, for his great personal bravery at the battle of Le Croby. Part of the crest of Lord Archer is also a mural crown, and there are no fewer than ten English baronets whose arms are ornamented with the same crown. Then, again, we have an instance of the 'Castrense' or 'Vallery' crown in the coat of arms of Sir Reginald Graham. The radiated crown appears also to have been placed over the arms of the kings of England till the time of Edward III. It is still used as a crest on the arms of some private families; for example, those borne by the name of Whitfield are ornamented with a radiated crown. The celestial crown is formed like the radiated, with the addition of a star on each ray; and it is only used upon tombstones, monuments, and the like.

The Pope or Bishop of Rome appropriates to himself a tiara or triple crown—similar to the lofty ornamental head-dress of the ancient Persians, and not unlike the mitre of the Jewish high-priest—a long cap of golden cloth, from which hang two pendants embroidered and fringed at the ends, semé of crosses of gold. This cap is enclosed by three marquises' coronets, having a mound of gold on its top, surmounted by a cross of the same precious metal, which cross is represented by engravers and painters pometted, recrossed, flowery, or plain. It is a difficult matter to ascertain the time when these haughty prelates first assumed the three fore-mentioned coronets. An engraving published a few years ago, by order of Clement XIII., the late Pope—for the edification of his good subjects in Great Britain and

Ireland—represents Marcellus, who was chosen Bishop of Rome in the year 307, and all his successors, adorned with a crown of this description. But, according to some authorities, Boniface VIII., who was elected into the see of Rome in the year 1294, first compassed his cap with a coronet; Benedict XII. in 1335 adding a second to it; and John XXIII. in 1411 a third, with a view to indicate by them that the Pope is the sovereign priest, the supreme judge, and the sole legislator among Christians.

The celebrated and ancient Iron Crown of Lombardy—removed to Vienna in 1859, but restored to the king of Italy in 1866—consisting of a broad circle of gold set with large precious stones, takes its name from the 'sacred iron band' within it, which is about three-eighths of an inch broad, and one-tenth of an inch in thickness. This band is traditionally said to have been made out of one of the nails used at the Crucifixion, and given to Constantine by his mother, the Empress Helena. Afterwards, it was used at the coronation of the Lombard kings, primarily at that of Agilulphus, at Milan, in the year 591. The outer circlet of the crown is composed of six equal parts of beaten gold, joined together by hinges, and set with large rubies, emeralds, and sapphires, on a ground of blue gold enamel. Within the circlet is the 'iron band,' without a speck of rust upon it, although it has existed for more than fifteen hundred years.

When the Emperor Napoleon I. was crowned king of Italy at Milan, May 23, 1805, he placed the iron crown of Lombardy upon his head with his own hands, exclaiming: 'Dieu me l'a donné; gare à qui la touche' (God has given it to me; beware who touches it), which was the haughty motto attached to it by its ancient owners.

The Hungarian crown, worn at their accession by the Emperors of Austria as kings of Hungary, is the identical one worn by Stephen eight hundred years ago. It is of pure gold, and weighs nine marks six ounces (fourteen pounds), and is adorned with fifty-three sapphires, fifty rubies, one emerald, and three hundred and thirty-eight pearls.

The crown of the kings of France is a circle enamelled, adorned with precious stones, and heightened up with eight arched diadems, rising from as many fleurs-de-lis, that conjoin at the top under a double fleur-de-lis, all of gold.

The crowns of Spain, Portugal, and Poland are all three of the same form, and are described by Colonel Parsons, in his *Genealogical Tables of Europe*, as 'ducal coronets heightened up with eight arched diadems supporting a mound, ensigned with a plain gold cross.' The crowns of Denmark and Sweden are of almost similar shape, consisting of the eight arched diadems, rising from a marquis's coronet (a circle of gold bordered with ermine, set round with four strawberry leaves, and as many pearls on pyramidical points of equal height, alternate), which conjoin at the top under a mound ensigned with a cross-botonnée. The kings of most other Continental countries are crowned with circles of gold adorned with precious stones, and heightened up with large 'trefoils,' and closed by four, six, or eight diadems supporting a mound surmounted by a cross. The trefoil upon the crown is thought to be of Gothic introduction. We find it upon the coins of Clovis and his sons, which has induced antiquaries to call it the 'fleur-de-lis' (the lily of France, represented in gold on a blue ground); but the fact is these trefoils were used on Constantinopolitan crowns before the time of the Franks, and afterwards on those of German Princes in no way allied to Charlemagne. Aubrey, a celebrated authority upon heraldry, was of opinion that the fleur-de-lis is really nothing more than a spear-head adorned, no flower of the lily kind having the middle part solid. The Sultan of Turkey bears over his arms a turban enriched with pearls and diamonds, under two coronets, the first of which is made of pyramidical points heightened up with large pearls; and the uppermost is surmounted with crescents.

With regard to the crown used in our own country, a fillet diadem of pearls appears on several of the Saxon *sceattæ*. Similar diadems or fillets adorn the heads of many of the Heptarchic kings. Alfred's crown has two little bells attached; it is said to have been long preserved at Westminster, and may have been that described in the Parliamentary inventory taken in 1649. The circle, surmounted by three small projections, first occurs upon the coins of Athelstan; on some of Edred's coins the projections end in pearls. A radiated cap appears first on a coin of Ethelred II.; and the 'trefoil' ornament is noticeable upon a few of the coins of Canute. Several varieties of arched cap and crown appear upon the coins of Edward the Confessor. The close or arched crown, which appears on some of the Confessor's coins, is used on all the types of Harold, and was adopted by the earlier Norman kings. On the Confessor's and the 'Conqueror's' coins we see labels appended at each ear; these, as we learn from an anecdote related by William of Malmesbury, in wearing the crown, were fastened by a clasp or button beneath the chin.

William I. wore his crown on a cap adorned with points and leaves alternately, each point being tipped with three pearls; while the whole crown was surmounted by a cross. William Rufus discontinued the leaves. On the coins of Stephen and Henry II. the open crown with fleurs-de-lis appears. Henry III. was crowned with a plain circle of gold, in lieu of the crown, which had been lost with the other jewels and baggage of King John in passing the marshes of Lynn, on the Wash, near Wisbech. Edward III. wore his crown ornamented with points fleurs-de-lis alternately, and fleurs-de-lis and crosses, as at present. Selden had read that Henry V. was the first of them who wore the arched crown; and in a window of Ockholt Manor-house, in Berkshire, 1465, there certainly remained, till within a few years, the arms of Henry VI. and his queen, Margaret of Anjou, in separate coats, both surmounted by the arched barred crown. From Henry VII. downward, this arched crown, with the globe and cross, has been continued.

'St Edward's crown' was made in imitation of the ancient crown said to have been worn by the Confessor, and kept in Westminster Abbey till the beginning of the Civil War in England, when, with the rest of the regalia, it was seized and sold. A new crown was prepared for Charles II. A magnificent crown was made for George IV. with the jewels of the old crown, and jewels borrowed of Rundell & Bridge, the Crown jewellers. This crown was fifteen inches in height; but the arches were not flat, as in the former crown, but rose almost to a point, and were surmounted by an orb of brilliants, upon which was placed a Maltese cross of brilliants with three fine pearls at its extremities. The arches were wreathed and fringed with diamonds, and four Maltese crosses of brilliants surrounded the crown, with four large diamond flowers intervening. On the centre of the back cross was the 'ancient ruby' which was worn at Crécy and Agincourt by the Black Prince and Henry V.; while the centre of the front cross was adorned with a splendid sapphire, more than two inches long and one inch broad; and a band of large diamonds, emeralds, sapphires, and rubies completed this magnificent diadem. It was estimated to be worth one hundred and fifty thousand pounds; and the expenses upon it, preparatory to the coronation of George IV., amounted to fifty or sixty thousand pounds, over and above the addition of the inestimable and unique sapphires.

The state crown of Queen Victoria was made for Her Majesty by Rundell & Bridge in 1838 with jewels taken from old crowns, and others furnished by the Queen's command. The following is a summary of jewels in the crown: 1 large ruby, 1 large broad sapphire, 16 sapphires, 11 emeralds, 4 rubies, 1363 brilliant diamonds, 1273 rose diamonds, 147 table diamonds, 4 drop-shaped pearls, and 273 pearls. Unlike most other princely crowns in Europe, all the jewels in the British crown are really precious stones; whereas, in other state crowns, valuable stones have been replaced with imitation stones of coloured glass.

HOW THE TOWN WAS SAVED.

He was not romantic to look at; indeed, there was something almost comic in the short stout figure, clad in its washed-out blouse, and the wrinkled sunburnt face under the faded *bonnet-rouge*, and yet in the heart of Pierre Goblet there were thoughts and feelings that might have done honour to some knight of old. For he was a patriot, this old French miller, fired with an enthusiasm that threescore years and ten had been unable to quench. His father had been one of the *Grande Armée* in the great Emperor's time; and from his boyhood Pierre had held in loyal veneration the image of the little man in the gray coat, who had led his conquering armies across Europe, and had made France a power to be dreaded far and wide. But many changes had passed over France since those days, changes that Pierre Goblet had watched with a sad heart.

In the summer of 1870, when the Franco-German war was at its height, Pierre Goblet stood one evening at the threshold of his home, smoking his pipe. The old mill, which had belonged to the Goblets for many generations, was built on the summit of some rising ground, and could be seen for many miles. The miller's little cottage was attached to the mill, but no other house was near. A few miles away lay the town of St André, the town to which the Goblets belonged. The whole scene was very fair to look upon in its summer beauty. Rich pasture-lands and vineyards, and on the summit of the hill the picturesque old mill, with the quaint little town plainly discernible in the distance. On the other side of the hill, away from the town, was a wood of old trees, which extended for many acres. Some of the trees, firs and others, were very ancient, and gave a dark, shadowy aspect to the whole.

The miller smoked thoughtfully as he gazed out before him along the white dusty road that led to the town. He was quite alone, for the few men he employed about the mill had gone to St André with a load of flour, and would not return with their empty wagons until the following day. It was a busy, anxious time for the inhabitants of St André, for they knew not when the Germans might be upon them, and they were preparing to hold their own against them, as St André was a fortified town, and, with proper care and precaution, they hoped to defend it at least against a sudden attack. For months past old Pierre had gone down to the village night after night to hear the last news, and to talk to the few men the war had left behind. The miller talked his heart out, trying to infect his neighbours with some of his own patriotic notions. But Pierre Goblet belonged to a bygone age, and the men, young and old, who gathered round him, although they listened respectfully enough, were too apathetic to understand him. They smoked and drank, while he, leaving the red wine untasted in his glass, talked and gesticulated, his dim eyes growing bright with the fire within him. But he did more than talk; he urged the townspeople on to some purpose in their preparations to sustain a siege, and in these preparations he himself gave substantial aid, for he kept his mill going early and late, until he had ground sufficient corn to keep the town in bread for many months to come.

Pierre Goblet had one child, a daughter, who was married to one of the chief shopkeepers of St André. Babette was a young and pretty woman. She was very fond of her father, yet she sympathised with him as little as any one in the town. This young French matron rejoiced in the fact that her Jules, to whom she had been married but a few months, had been passed over by the conscription on account of a slight deafness. She and her father could not think alike on this, or indeed on any subject connected with the war. One day, when the preparations for fortifying the town were nearly completed, Babette declared that, when all was done, her father must come and stay with her until the war troubles were at an end. Old Pierre could not endure the thought of leaving his mill, and he said: 'I suppose it must be so, little one, since I am too old to carry a gun.'

'My father,' the girl cried quickly, 'why regret that you cannot go out to be killed?

If you were the youngest and the strongest, what difference could one man make?'

'Ah! child, that is the spirit of the age, that would shirk all responsibility,' the old man answered sadly. 'But that was not what the soldiers in my young days were taught. Then each man who went to swell the numbers of those conquering armies felt that it rested with him, individually, whether the end should be victory or disaster!'

The only answer to this speech was a ringing laugh, and then Babette pressed her pretty lips caressingly on the miller's bald head, and so the father and daughter parted; the old man making his way back to the mill, from which, the next day, he despatched the last load of flour to the town.

The twilight deepened as Pierre Goblet stood by the solitary mill, gazing dreamily out before him. He was so lost in thought that his pipe had died out unheeded, and he did not hear the sound of approaching footsteps. It was only when a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder that he turned and found himself surrounded by some half-dozen big men in the Prussian uniform. Before Pierre had realised what had happened, he had drifted, with the soldiers, into the cottage, and the door was closed upon them. The man who had first accosted him still kept his hand upon his arm; and as the miller looked at him, he saw, from his dress and bearing, that he was an officer. He gave the old man a little impatient shake, as if to arrest his attention, and then addressed him in very fluent French.

'Monsieur le Miller, we have come to intrude ourselves upon your hospitality,' he said. 'Remember that you cannot say us no; so take matters with a good grace, and bring out quickly all your larder boasts in the way of meat and drink.'

Pierre Goblet saw that resistance was useless, and without a word he turned to obey. As he moved about he could hear the officer and his men talking eagerly together, but their tongue was an unintelligible jargon to him- he could not understand a word.

The officer seated himself at the table, and the men waited upon him before satisfying their own hunger. Then meat, bread, and wine were placed in a basket, and two of the men left the cottage carrying it between them. From the window Pierre Goblet watched them making their way in the direction of the wood. They were evidently taking food to some other officers who were left in charge of men there. It was too dark for Pierre to distinguish anything, but he felt certain that a large body of men—perhaps many thousands—were concealed among the trees, only waiting until it was night that they might swoop down upon St André and take it by surprise.

The old miller's heart sank within him as he thought of the little town, whose fast approaching doom seemed inevitable. If only it were possible to warn the inhabitants of their danger! But he was a prisoner in his own home. An hour went by, and the daylight slowly faded. The officer who had taken possession of the cottage was joined by another, a younger man, and they sat together over the fire smoking and talking. Above the chimney-piece was a coloured print of the first Napoleon. It was a poor little picture, and did but scant justice to the handsome face it was supposed to represent; but the cocked-hat, the gray coat, and the faded red ribbon across the breast, were all familiar to Pierre, and he had cherished the little portrait for many years. All at once the younger of the two Germans caught sight of it. He gave a derisive laugh, and snatching it from the wall, tossed it upon the fire. There was a bright flame for an instant; then a scrap of black charred paper floated upwards in the smoke. With set teeth, Pierre Goblet stood and watched. The expression of his face was inscrutable, but as his eyes followed that black atom, as it disappeared up the open chimney, a sudden moisture filled them that made the whole place swim. Then he went slowly from the room. He scarcely glanced at the outer door, where the soldiers were standing to prevent any one from passing out, but turned along a narrow passage to where a flight of wooden steps led up to the granary of the mill. He ascended them slowly and pushed open the trap-door. The soldiers made no effort to detain him, for they knew that it was impossible that he could escape through the mill.

Pierre Goblet emerged into the granary and closed the trap-door after him, and fastened it. He had no special object in going to the mill except that he might find solitude. He stood still and ruminated. On the whitened floor empty sacks and odds and ends were strewn about, and among them he noticed a large can that was filled with petroleum. He was always well supplied with this oil, for it was used for the many lamps about the mill, but having no further need for it at present, he had directed that this can should be taken in the last wagon and left in the town, as he thought his daughter might find it useful in the time of siege when necessaries ran short. However, his instructions had been forgotten, and the petroleum remained behind. At another time the carelessness of his men would have annoyed him, but his mind was too full of a large trouble now for a small one to give him a second thought.

A wooden ladder ran up the side of the mill to the little door-like window that opened just behind the wheel. Pierre Goblet mounted the ladder, opened the window, and leaned out. Only a foot or two from him the great sails were going steadily round and round—the four huge arms that had been familiar to him since his childhood; and to him each had an individuality of its own. He knew them by the way the little bits of canvas had been patched and mended by his dexterous fingers; a scrap of brown canvas, that he had put in only a few days ago, caught his eye, and as it passed him again and again, mechanically he counted the evolutions of the wheel, for his nerves were strained to such high tension that he scarcely knew what he did. On and on went the sails with their steady, monotonous motion, and the great wheel groaned and creaked in its socket.

Then Pierre Goblet turned his eyes away from the mill and looked straight before him, to where—a few miles distant— the little town lay; and he thought of its unconscious inhabitants. They little knew what that night would bring them, that to many it might be their last on earth. Next the old man looked towards the wood. It was grim, dark, impenetrable. But in his fancy he could see men armed to the teeth, who watched and waited, ready at the first word of command to spring upon their prey. Then Pierre Goblet lifted his head and looked up into the clear cool sky, where a few pale stars were shining. His lips did not move, but from his heart went up an agonised cry that he might be shown a way to help his countrymen. If he were even then upon the road, he knew he should not have time to reach the town. Most likely, a German bullet would find him out, and he would fall lifeless by the road-side, his work undone. How could he warn St André? Their preparations to receive the enemy were so nearly completed, and a few hours would make so much difference!

All at once the light of inspiration came into the old man's face; his eyes glowed with a sudden eager hope. He did not hesitate for an instant. Carefully he clambered down the ladder back on to the granary floor. First he took a dark-lantern from a shelf and lighted it; next, he found a long thin stick, which he placed with the lantern, ready for his use. Then he uncorked the can of petroleum and carried it slowly and steadily up the ladder. He leaned from the little window as far as he was able, and tilted the can gently, so that a stream of oil fell upon the great sails as they passed. Again and again each arm in turn received its portion, until the wind-dried canvas was soaked through and through, and the ponderous wheel groaned and creaked more loudly under its increasing weight.

Pierre Goblet replaced the empty can, and taking up the lantern and the stick, he mounted the ladder once more. But before he proceeded with his operations, he glanced in the direction of the town, and there was a smile on his lips as he murmured: 'Ah! my little Babette, one man—and an old man too—may make a difference!' Then, pushing back the slide of the lantern, he lit the stick, and leaning from the window, he fired his beacon! He touched each arm as it passed, and in an instant a huge wheel of fire, that could be seen for many miles, was whirling round.

Pierre Goblet knew that in a very short space the whole mill would be on fire. Still, that blazing wheel must attract attention, and one moment was enough to give an alarm.

The smell of fire, the noise of burning wood, brought the Germans hurrying from the cottage. But Pierre Goblet heeded them not. He stood there gazing from the window, though he was almost blinded by the flames as they passed close to him. There was a look of breathless expectation on his face, which, after a moment, changed to one of intense relief. For a strange conviction had come to him that the alarm was taken! He knew, as surely as if he had been among them, that at the eleventh hour the people realised their danger, and would be prepared.

The old man's eyes glowed with a rapturous happiness as he gazed up into the starry heavens with a mingled cry of gratitude and supplication. Then, as he felt that the fire and smoke were overpowering him, he roused himself for one last effort. Waving his hand towards the German soldiers, he shouted in a voice that rang out loud and clear, 'Vive la France!'

NEW CALEDONIA.

The official announcement recently made by the French Government to the effect that it had determined to cease transporting criminals to New Caledonia, has closed a period which to many interests of the South Seas was one of fear and friction. Negotiations towards some such result as that stated have been going on for many years, the Australian colonies more than once manifesting a desire to force the hand of British diplomacy, so real was the injury they sustained by the nearness of the penal settlement, and so great was the apprehension that that injury would grow in aggravating bitterness as the years went by. New Caledonia is seven hundred and thirty miles from the coast of Queensland, its capital, Noumea, being ten hundred and fifty miles from Sydney; and venturesome spirits, goaded by the system of control on the island, thought little of making a dash for freedom across these miles of sea. It looked, therefore, as if Australia, which resisted so stoutly the advent of criminals from England forty-six years ago, would in time find itself burdened with numbers of as bad, if not worse, ones from France.

A short while back, seven such escapes sighted Queensland after a perilous trip of eighteen days in an open boat. They had stolen the boat from a publican on the island, stored it with eighty pounds of rice, sixty coco-nuts, and a small bag of biscuits, and committed themselves to the waves. When they reached the Barrier, lying off the Queensland coast, the boat was capsized, and men and provisions were precipitated into the sea. The breakers which capsized the boat washed it over into smooth water, where the men again regained it, and, righting it, continued the voyage, but now without a mouthful of food in their possession. Five days later they arrived at Whitsunday Island, in the sorriest of plights, and were befriended by a tribe of black-fellows, until the Queensland police discovered and arrested them as escaped convicts. Persons arrested on this charge are tried by a special court, and if found guilty, are handed over to the New Caledonian authorities to be redelivered at the settlement. Escapes like that narrated are numerous, but arrests such as described are seldom so prompt or sure. Convicts have struck the mainland unobserved, and made their way into the bush, where they have become station hands, or fallen into the ways of the nomadic 'swagsman,' and no particular notice has been taken of them. Sometimes, too, they discover friends of their own nationality, and are helped to successfully disguise themselves and their objects; and usually, if they are found settled down, they are not interfered with. But when they are unlucky enough to put into any large town, they mostly go to the bad, or are caught and sent back. During the Communist excitement of 1874, the well-known Rochefort, with five associates, escaped from New Caledonia, and landed at Newcastle, New South Wales, where their history became at once known, and friends and enemies were set in motion. The ordinary convict who reaches a large town is, however, either tamely caught, or he drops in among the dregs of the population, and applies himself industriously to some form of midnight law-breaking. He mostly takes up the line which originally caused his deportation from France, and often displays skill and presence of mind in his operations. Coining, burglary, safe-robbing, and waylaying the tipsy or belated, are favourite exploits with this class of criminal; and sometimes the work is done with such perfection of detail, that detectives know the nationality of the perpetrator before they lay hands on him. It may be that these escapes have not been at any time so numerous as the Australian public assert, but seeing that they so often come to light when gangs of thieves are captured, or a course of systematic crime is suddenly stopped, the general impression as to their numbers may not be far astray.

The French Government classifies its New Caledonian convicts as 'recidivistes,' 'condamnés,' and 'libérés,' the first meaning habitual criminals; the second, persons undergoing a sentence; and the third, what we would call 'ticket-of-leave men,' or persons sometimes who have fulfilled their term of punishment, but who are refused permission to return to France. The recidivistes and condamnés are ever on the watch for a chance to escape. They esteem almost any spot on earth as a better place to live than where they are. Some of the libérés are not very objectionable, and in the days when those of them who would not be permitted to return to France were allowed to go to America or Australia, they frequently behaved well, and adopted industrious and lawful occupations. Many of them drifted to the New Hebrides, and are now in independent circumstances there. But the privilege of leaving New Caledonia for America or Australia was withdrawn some years ago, and hence the convicts must now be kept on the island.

In 1882 a trading company was formed with the object of transferring some of this convict labour to the New Hebrides. As such a transfer would increase French power in the latter group of islands, as well as make room for fresh consignments of convicts in the old quarters, the French Government took up the idea with zest, and established as a preliminary two military posts in the neighbourhood. But England, vigorously prompted by Australia, protested against the scheme with such effect that it was abandoned; and in six years after, the military posts were abolished. M. Biard d'Aunet, the French Consul-general at present in New South Wales, visited New Caledonia about a year ago, and discussed with the Governor of the settlement various projects for the termination of transportation. M. Biard d'Aunet was fully possessed of the Australian sentiment on the matter, and the outcome of the conference was a series of recommendations to the French Government, which culminated in the decree of the Chamber of Deputies directing that transportation to New Caledonia should cease, and that in future convicts should be sent to one of the French possessions in Africa.

The news of the cessation of transportation was received by the business portion of the New Caledonian community with undisguised ill-favour. The mineral resources of the island are very great, and are as yet but partially tapped. Chrome, cobalt, and nickel abound. The soil is fruitful; coco-nuts, bananas, and bread-fruits growing wild. Sugar-cane and coffee-planting, and other industries of a tropical character, promise to be profitable pursuits. With quick returns from these sources in mind, employers of labour naturally desired cheap workmen, and the convict system which obtained lent itself admirably to their needs. In 1879 the Government entered into a compact with Mr John Higginson, a naturalised Frenchman and old Noumean resident, whereby he was granted the services of three hundred convicts for twenty years, at the charge of one penny per day per man, the Government agreeing to feed and clothe them during that period. Three or four similar agreements were entered into with other employers. Seventy Chinese convicts lately landed at Noumea, were immediately hired out to applicants for their services. The sentences on these convicts ran from five to fifteen years, and the applicants paid the hiring bureau a trifling sum per year of sentence, and guaranteed to pay the convicts afterwards at the rate of twelve shillings per month. Consequently, it is not surprising that the news of the impending change produced a disquieting effect.

But the die is cast. New Caledonia enters the list of free countries. Though the immediate effect may be injurious to some businesses, general business is sure to be favourably affected, and social and political life to be improved. New South Wales ceased to be a convict settlement in 1839, Van Diemen's Land in 1853, and Western Australia in 1868; and in each case a new spirit appeared to breathe through the country when the convict flag was lowered. Progress, political, social, and industrial, has been the yearly record. There is no reason to fear a different record for New Caledonia.

A SUMMER NIGHT.

THE long bright sunny day is at an end;
From out the western sky, the last faint ray
Of crimson glory pales, and fades to gray;
And silently o'er sea and land descend
The quiet shadows of the summer night.
The drowsy garden-flowers, responsive now
To the soft pressure of the falling dew,
Fill all the air with sweetness: cottage lights
Flit out into the darkness, one by one:
The plaintive wailing of the lone sea-bird
Is hushed; and all is silent, save the sad,
Low murmur of the summer waves, whose song,
From yonder clear blue heaven, overhead,
The silent, list'ning stars stoop down to hear.

M. C. C.

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'M.P.'

THE TRIBULATIONS AND ADVANTAGES OF LEGISLATORS.

The hurlyburly of the General Election is over; the six hundred and seventy members who constitute the House of Commons have been duly returned; and now that the excitement and fever of the electoral campaign have abated, it may not, perhaps, be out of place to consider the pleasures and sorrows of a Member of Parliament.

Lord Macaulay has given us a graphic description of what he calls 'the tedious and exhaustive routine' of an M.P.'s political life during the sitting of Parliament. 'Waiting whole evenings to vote,' he says, 'and then walking half a mile at a foot's pace round and round the crowded lobbies; dining amidst clamour and confusion, with a division twenty minutes long between two of the mouthfuls; trudging home at three in the morning through the slush of a February thaw; and sitting behind Ministers in the centre of a closely-packed bench during the hottest week of the London summer.' If this were a complete picture of parliamentary life, if M.P.s were such slaves and martyrs to duty as Macaulay (who was himself in Parliament) would have us believe, it would indeed be difficult to understand why a seat in the House of Commons should be regarded as the highest object of ambition, and be sighed for, and schemed for, and fought for by thousands of able and wide-awake men. Above all, one would be at a loss to comprehend the action of men who, like Macaulay himself, having had experience of parliamentary life—of its hard and thankless work, of the mental strain it involves, and of its physical inconveniences and discomforts—labour unceasingly, night and day, during the three weeks or a month the General Election lasts, and spend thousands of pounds in inducing the electors to send them back again to the weary and dreary round of routine tasks at Westminster. But the truth is that Macaulay has given only the dark features of parliamentary life. There is a bright side to the picture also. The work of an M.P. is hard, but, as we shall see presently, it has its compensations.

The tribulations of a Member of Parliament are undoubtedly many. Dark as is the picture drawn by Macaulay, it could easily be made more forbidding. In the first place, the initial cost of obtaining a seat in the House of Commons is always great. Candidates are obliged by the Corrupt Practices Act of 1883 (which has fixed a maximum scale of electioneering expenses, varying in amount according to the extent and character of the constituency) to furnish a return of their expenses; and according to a Blue-book on the subject—issued in connection with the General Election of 1892—it appears that close on a million of money was spent by the one thousand three hundred and seven candidates who fought for seats in the House of Commons in that electoral campaign. The average expenses of the six hundred and seventy successful candidates were about seven hundred pounds each. But that does not, as a rule, represent a third of the financial cost of the honour and dignity of the office of Member of Parliament. Before the contest takes place, the constituency has to be 'nursed,' with a view to securing the good-will and support of the electors. 'Nursing' is a very expensive process. Many a man has spent from one thousand to five thousand pounds a year, for two or even five years before the General Election, in the constituency he aspires to represent. A newspaper has often been run by a prospective candidate at a tremendous loss, ostensibly for the laudable object of supplying the electors with news, but really to keep prominently before them the virtues of the man who is wooing their suffrages, and the grandeur and magnificence of the political principles he supports.

And this process of 'nursing' does not end with the election of the 'nurse' to the House of Commons. Gratitude, which is well defined, in electioneering matters at least, as a lively sense of favours to come, makes it incumbent on the M.P. to pay careful attention to the wants and wishes of his constituents. He cannot afford to ignore a request from even the humblest and obscurest of electors. His popularity depends, in a greater or less degree, on his mode of dealing with communications from constituents. And knowing the dependent and trammelled position, in that respect, of their member, his constituents make the most extravagant and unreasonable demands on his time and purse. Some idea of the enormous amount of correspondence which Members of Parliament have to deal with at the House of Commons itself, may be gathered from the statement that something like thirty-two thousand letters and nineteen thousand telegrams are received and despatched every week during the session. Begging letters predominate in this vast mass of correspondence. Time was when a Member of Parliament had some patronage to distribute in the way of posts in the Customs and Excise, if the party he supported were in power. But that time is gone and for ever; and the only patronage now at the disposal of an M.P., when his party is in office, is the nomination to any vacant sub-post-office in his constituency—an eventuality which seldom arises, greatly to the relief of our representatives, because for the one friend they make of the successful person in such transactions, they make twenty enemies among those who are disappointed.

It would seem, however, as if a large number of the electors are still under the impression that their representatives have abundance of nice, fat, comfortable posts at their disposal. Members of Parliament are consequently inundated with demands from supporters for posts for their sons and daughters as clerks and messengers to the House of Commons, typists in the different State departments, boatmen in the Customs service, private secretaries, and countless other positions outside Parliament and the Civil Service, which it is believed the influence of our legislators could easily secure.

Then there are the letters from constituents, half pathetic and half laughable—fathers of families who are visited with illness and distress, and require pecuniary assistance; tradesmen on the verge of bankruptcy, who could be restored to a sound financial position by a loan of fifty pounds; widows of electors who have been left with marriageable daughters, and want to know whether husbands for them cannot be found, if not among the members, at least among the policemen on duty about the House; tradesmen who send on samples of their goods—whiskies, walking-sticks, and even perambulators (if the announcement of an interesting event in the member's family has been published)—with requests for testimonials; ingenious persons who have invented mixtures, pellets, and appliances for transforming a hoarse voice into a voice silvery, ringing, and resonant, and making the dull and turgid speaker clear and eloquent. The trials and temptations of a Member of Parliament are also numerous and exasperating. He is frequently insulted by being offered bribes if he will allow his name to be used in the floating of some Company, or in the advertising of some article of common use or patent medicine; if he will use his influence in obtaining a Government contract for a certain firm, or in securing for some person a post in the gift of one of the Ministers. In a recent debate in the House of Commons on the payment of members, Mr John Burns created much amusement by reading the reply to an offer of fifty pounds made to him by a person in Belfast if he succeeded in obtaining for him a vacant collectorship of taxes. 'Sir,' replied Mr Burns, 'you are a scoundrel. I wish you were within reach of my boot.'

Our legislators are also inundated with appeals in aid of funds for churches, chapels, mission halls, schools, working-men's institutes, political clubs, hospitals, asylums, and institutions of all kinds; and although many of them may never have played cricket or football, or run a race in their lives, and would not trust themselves on bicycles any more than on wild mustangs, they are expected to become patrons and presidents (paying substantial donations for the honour) of every athletic, cricket, football, and bicycle club in their constituencies. Then there are many local functions—religious, social, and political—to which they are invited. Whenever a meeting for any purpose is being organised in a constituency, the first thought is to try to get the member to attend. The more conspicuous he is in Parliament, and therefore the more likely to attract an audience, the greater is the volume of those invitations which pour in upon him week after week, and the more widespread is the disappointment and dissatisfaction among his constituents if he does not attend. He is expected to preside at smoking concerts and local political dinners, to attend picnics and fêtes of friendly societies, to visit local clubs, to open bazaars, and to say a few words at charity performances and mixed entertainments of a political character, at which he is sandwiched between sentimental and comic singers, and is forced to imbibe numberless cups of inferior tea.

There is no doubt that most of the men who aspire to seats in the House of Commons do so with an honest and genuine desire to serve the State, to benefit the community, to promote that primary object of good government—'the greatest happiness of the greatest number.' These they rightly consider to be the chief functions of a legislator; and in the first flush of their enthusiasm after election, many of them intrepidly and zealously set about informing themselves of the principles of constitutional government, and of the subjects that are likely to engage the attention of Parliament. They soon find, however, that to do this properly, would leave them very little time for anything else. Most of them, perhaps, give up the task in despair; and instead of attempting to arrive at independent conclusions by personal investigation and study, they largely rely on the speeches of their political leaders, and on the articles of the party newspapers, to direct them on the right path in regard to the public questions of the day.

Every M.P. finds his breakfast table heaped every morning during the session with an enormous pile of parliamentary papers, consisting of books, bills, reports, returns, and other documents. Blue-books are universally admitted to be not very exciting reading, and eighty volumes of these books—ominously ponderous and portentously dull—are on an average issued every year, all of them demanding the immediate attention of the conscientious legislator. The bills, or embryo Acts of Parliament, are more inviting, embodying, as they do, the fads and hobbies entertained by the six hundred and seventy members of the House of Commons. About three hundred of those bills are introduced every session, and are printed and circulated amongst members, who are expected to make themselves acquainted with their provisions.

One of the great disappointments in the life of an M.P. is that, though sessions come and sessions go, his little pet scheme of legislation, which he hoped to be able to place on the statute book, never advances beyond the initiatory stage of first reading. Another cruel disappointment is that, after devoting days and nights to taxing his brain for antitheses, epigrams, and other flowers of rhetoric for his speech in a great debate, he patiently sits night after night during the time allotted for the debate, on the pounce to 'catch the Speaker's eye,' but fails to fix the attention of that wandering orb; while he hears his arguments and his illustrations used by other men, who had probably gone to the same source for them, until at last the end comes without an opportunity having been afforded him to relieve his mind of the weighty unspoken speech which oppresses it. Then his constituents complain that he is a useless 'silent member,' if they do not see his name figuring in the newspaper reports. They are convinced he is neglecting his duty. And what consolation is it to him to think of the old saying that 'they are the wisest part of Parliament who use the greatest silence;' or of the opinion of the party leaders—especially the leaders of the party in office—that he is the most useful of members who never takes part in the debates, but is ever at hand to record his vote when the division bells ring out their alarum?

Other sore tribulations of the poor M.P. are that his opinions are dictated by his leaders—his movements controlled by the Whips. Party discipline is very strict, and violations of it, however slight, are rarely condoned. If a member is bold enough to take an independent stand in regard to any of the political questions of the day, his speech in the House, explaining his position, is received with scoffs and jeers by his colleagues, and, what is perhaps more uncomfortable, approving cheers by members on the other side. If he persists in this course, he is regarded as a crank and a faddist, and is severely 'cut' by his party. Again, strongly worded and heavily underscored communications, demanding his immediate attendance at Westminster, are frequently delivered to him at the most inopportune moments—when he is just sitting down to a delightful little dinner, or about to leave his house for a pleasant night at the Gaiety Theatre—and if, yielding to the temptations of the flesh, he ignores this peremptory call of political duty, his past services are forgotten, he gets a solemn lecture from the Chief Whip, on the enormity of his offence, and, mayhap, his name is published in an official 'black list' of defaulters, or he comes across a nasty little paragraph exposing his neglect of duty in the local newspaper which most widely circulates amongst his constituents.

But, happily, when the litany of the tribulations of an M.P. is exhausted, there remain to be told many countervailing pleasures and advantages, which make a seat in the House of Commons well worth the physical labour and mental worry involved in winning it, and retaining it.

A member of the House of Commons is allowed to attach to his name the magic letters 'M.P.,' which are a source of pride and gratification to himself, and secure for him the respect and deference of others. These initials undoubtedly contribute, too, to his social status. Doors of social circles, hitherto locked and barred, are open wide to him; and invitations to social functions in the houses of the great and wealthy members of his party reach him during the session. Then he is a member of 'the best club in London.' It is, indeed, frequently denied that the House of Commons still maintains that pre-eminence as a social haunt of men, which, it is universally acknowledged, once rightly belonged to it. But, as a matter of fact, the House is more of a club now than it has ever been in its centuried existence. It is provided with handsome dining-rooms, smoking-rooms, reading-rooms; and only this year it advanced another important stage in its continuous development and progress as a club, by having a suite of bathrooms and dressing-rooms added to its *entourage*. In its smoking-room may be met, in the pleasant relaxation of a chat and gossip, not only some of the most distinguished men in the kingdom, but a far greater variety of types of men than can be encountered in the smoking-room of any club in London. Mr Labouchere, indeed, has said a couple of hours could be passed far more enjoyably in the smoking-room of the House of Commons than in the smoking-room of the Carlton or Reform Club. It was the member for Northampton also who declared that the House of Commons was not only one of the pleasantest, but one of the healthiest places in the world, and that he far preferred a month on its green benches to a month on the Promenade of Brighton.

There is a popular belief that members are paid five guineas per day for their attendance on Select Committees; but it is absolutely unfounded. Members of Committees do not get a penny; and indeed, with the exception of the Ministry, not a single M.P. gets any financial recompense from the State in return for his services in Parliament. But every member—and specially the young, and able, and ambitious—has a chance of an office in an Administration; and nice, fat salaries—though, indeed, in no case more than the work to be done warrants—are attached to these offices.

Let us see how the salaries, which are paid quarterly, work out in weekly instalments. The First Lord of the Treasury, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the five principal Secretaries of State, who deal with Foreign Affairs, the Home Office, India, the Colonies, and the Army, receive each the weekly sum of £96, 3s. The First Lord of the Admiralty receives £86, 10s. per week, and the Chief Secretary for Ireland, £85, 1s. per week. Next come the Postmaster-general and the Chairman of Committees, who each receive £48, 1s.; while the weekly salary of the Secretary for Scotland, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the President of the Board of Trade, and the President of the Local Government Board, is £38, 9s.

There are other pecuniary advantages attached to a seat in the House of Commons. The demand for M.P.s as directors of companies is always very brisk, though of late this means of adding to their income is discountenanced and looked upon with distrust and suspicion by the vast majority of the members. A barrister-at-law also finds that a seat in the House of Commons materially advances his position in his profession; and the great prize of a place on the Judicial Bench is always in the offing. Above all, however disappointed a member may be in his dreams of personal ambition and in his schemes of pet legislation, there is the ever-present and consoling thought that he exercises a potent voice—or perhaps we should say vote—in the Government of the greatest and mightiest Empire in the world.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XIX.—AN ICE.

'A GLORIOUS land, no doubt; but what country, even with a man's hopes at zero, could compare with that she treads,' thought Wynyan, as he stood back looking on, while Endoza and his daughter hastened forward to welcome the new arrivals. Wynyan's pulses were now accelerated as he noted the change which had come over the graceful figure in her simple mourning robe. Rénée's face looked sad and careworn as she stood talking to Isabel, and with the emotion in his heart growing tumultuous, Wynyan was wondering how she would meet him—what she would say—whether, after all, there would be hope in the future, or whether it was the veriest madness on his part to harbour such ideas, when he became conscious of the fact that Brant was watching him with an unpleasant scowl on his countenance.

Then Brant was passed over and forgotten. How it all happened he never knew, for the Count's salon was transformed, and the whole scene became dreamy and strange. Wynyan knew that he spoke to Miss Bryne, who gently reproached him for not having been near them.

'I know,' she said, 'that you have had some quarrel with my nephew, and have left the offices, Mr Wynyan; but I have nothing to do with the business matters, and we shall be very pleased to see you again.'

'We shall be very pleased!' The words rang in Wynyan's ears, and a few minutes after he was seated near Rénée, talking of the past, her saddened gray eyes meeting his wistfully from time to time, as if asking for his sympathy. But there was no look of love therein; and the discourse was almost entirely about the dead.

'I ought not to be here, Mr Wynyan,' she said at last; 'but my aunt almost insisted upon my coming. You will not think me thoughtless—that it is too soon.'

That was the only hopeful sentence in their conversation; but it helped to fan the fire. She did value his opinion.

There was no time for more. Brant came up, and almost roughly began: 'Here, Rénée, I want to speak to you.'

But he in turn was interrupted by their young hostess, whom he had abruptly left when he could bear witnessing the *tête-à-tête* no longer.

'Really, Rénée dear, you must take your cousin and scold him well for his bad manners. I have been talking to him for five minutes, and he has not heard a word I said. He has been staring at you all the time, and longing to get to your side. But he is not going to monopolise you here. I mean to have a chat with you myself.—There, you two gentlemen can go and smoke a cigarette in the next room.'

This all in a playful spirit full of badinage; and as Isabel seated herself beside her guest, Brant turned off angrily, and made towards an open doorway draped by a heavy curtain, while the Count was bending impressively over Miss Bryne, who, poor lady, looked faint with pleasure; and as Wynyan strolled towards where a guest was standing alone, he thought of the doctor and then of the Count's offer.

'I thought I should hardly get a word with you, Rénée dearest,' began Isabel, leaning towards her friend affectionately, and gently agitating the half-mourning fan she carried, for the benefit of both.

'I'm afraid that you will find me rather a dull companion,' said Rénée sadly.

'Dull? For shame, dear! Do you think I am so hard-hearted and frivolous as not to feel for you intensely? Oh Rénée, dear, I do wish I could make you happy. You must—indeed you must—try and cease all this sorrowing, and come out a little more.'

Rénée shook her head.

'But you ought, dear, really. We mourn with you, but we want to see you happy.'

'I know you do, dear,' replied Rénée, who, while often feeling a kind of pity mingled with contempt for her friend, gladly listened to, and believed in the girl's eager offers of sympathy.

'She is not as we are,' Rénée would say to herself. 'This childish womanliness is her nature, and I believe that in her way she loves me.'

She felt this more than ever as, behind the great fan, Isabel's hand glided to hers, and gave it a long, warm pressure, while, when their eyes met, Isabel's were brimming and sad with pity, and she uttered a low sob.

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Rénée's fingers closed more firmly upon those of her young hostess, and she looked her thanks.

And that evening her heart felt more attuned to sympathy. There was a warmer glow there, and a saddened feeling of satisfaction at meeting Paul Wynyan again. She had heard of the trouble between him and her cousin, but in her great sorrow she had tried not to think of him, perhaps vainly. Now they had met once more, and his grave sympathetic words had fallen pleasantly upon her ears, bringing with them dreamy thoughts which she shrank from, as if they were full of guilt.

And now as she sat there, with Isabel talking to her almost in whispers, she turned her eyes to see that Wynyan was looking towards them; and as she met his gaze, hers did not shrink away till she was conscious that her companion had caught the direction in which she was looking, and said quietly: 'Do you like Mr Wynyan, dear?'

'I?—Yes,' said Rénée hurriedly. 'He was very much in my poor father's confidence.'

'Yes,' said Isabel, 'I know, dear. How I used to tease you about him—but you weren't hurt,' she added hastily.

'Hurt? No.'

'It was very thoughtless of me, I know. I am terribly thoughtless sometimes. I used to think that you cared for him, but of course I know better now. But do you like him?'

'Oh yes, I like him,' said Rénée, looking at the bright, fragile little thing half wonderingly.

'I am so glad, because he is so—so—what you call bluff and frank; and you do like me to confide in you, Rénée, don't you?'

'Of course, Isabel.'

Rénée heard her own words faintly, for there was a strange singing in her ears, and a peculiar tremor ran through her.

'I am so glad, because it is so nice to have some one who feels like a sister, and to whom one can open one's very heart. Of course, I should not speak to any one else as I do to you, dear, because perhaps I am not justified in saying so much; but I cannot help feeling and thinking a great deal, though nothing has been said. These matters are instinctive, are they not?'

'I—I cannot tell,' said Rénée, before whose eyes a mist had arisen, which blotted out Wynyan, and threatened to shut out the whole world, till she made a tremendous effort to maintain her composure.

'Oh, they are, dear, I am sure—quite sure,' whispered Isabel. 'I am in great trouble about it, though, for papa is so proud of his fine old Spanish descent; and though he likes Mr Wynyan very much, he may think it would be lowering me in my position as his child. I don't, for when one loves, one can only think that he is everything that is noble and great. You think Mr Wynyan is nice, don't you, dear?'

'I think Mr Wynyan is very gentlemanly,' said Rénée faintly, and the mist seemed thicker than ever.

'Yes, dear, that is exactly what he is, and if it goes on, papa will have to introduce him to the President, and he will be decorated, and they will make him a Count.'

'I thought you had no titles,' said Rénée, growing calmer now, and forcing herself to be firm.

'We are supposed not to have, dear, but the people like them, and they think so much of a foreigner who is a Count or a Chevalier. He will go over to Deconcagua, of course, and I shall go for a time; but I never will consent to live there, after being in dear old foggy England with its society. Some day when I come back to live here, we can be so much together again, and I suppose you will be Mrs—— Oh, how funny! Why, Rénée dearest, you will not have changed your name.'

'No,' said Rénée, after drawing a long deep breath, and looking firmly at her companion: 'I shall not have changed my name.'

'Yes, dear; what is it?' said Isabel, as her companion rose, just as Brant came back again, smoking his cigarette.

'I was going to join my aunt, dear,' said Rénée in a strangely altered tone.

'Do, dear; I'm afraid I am neglecting other people, but it is so hard to remember every one.—Oh, here is your cousin. May I have a chat with him?'

'Of course,' said Rénée coldly; and as she reached Miss Bryne, who was sitting alone, looking very stately and dreamy, Brant took the seat his cousin had vacated.

'Well, little one,' he said familiarly; 'why, you look prettier than ever.'

'What a rude remark!' said Isabel, pouting, and looking offended.

'It's the truth,' said Brant.—'I say, Isabel, why do you have that cad here?'

'Cad? What cad? Oh, for shame! You don't mean Mr Lisle, the great ironmaster?'

'Him! No. You know who I mean: that fellow who used to be with us—Wynyan.'

'For shame! You mustn't call him that. Papa says he is the cleverest man he knows, and he is sure that he will some day be great.'

'Him! Great! Bosh!'

'What a word! Besides, I like him. He isn't handsome, but he looks brave and strong.'

'What! You like him? You'd better not. If I thought you meant it, I'd lay wait for him and break his neck. I say'——

'No, I shall not listen to you, sir. I will not have such dreadful threats made in my presence.'

'Then you shouldn't have him here.'

'How can I help it? Papa asks whom he pleases.'

'Well, I know some one who wouldn't have been here if he had known. I don't consider him to be good enough company for my cousin.'

'You seem very jealous about the company your cousin keeps,' said Isabel with a toss of her head.

'Well, so I am,' retorted Brant; and then, after a furtive glance round: 'Ten times as jealous, though, about beautiful little Isabel. I say, beauty—don't have him here again.'

'Hush!'

'All right—but don't.'

'You need not mind, Brant.'

'I don't now,' he whispered. 'I say, this is real happiness. It makes me feel as if I should like it to be always so.'

'No,' said Isabel, 'you don't mean it. I can't believe you.'

'Yes, you do. I'm not much of a fellow, I know, but I've got eyes in my head, and—I have—can't we walk out on to the balcony or into the conservatory?'

'It's all sooty in the balcony, and nothing to see but street lamps.'

'Conservatory, then?'

'There isn't one. Ah, you should be in Deconcagua, where we have the loveliest of gardens, all orange and lemon trees and flowers.'

'Some day—some day,' whispered Brant.

'I shall get such a scolding, not some day, but to-night, when you are all gone,' said Isabel, rising; and though Brant sought for it, he did not enjoy another *tête-à-tête* with his young hostess, so turned to Rénée.

'Like a beautiful icicle,' he muttered, as he went to seek some more refreshment. 'Why don't the old chap have some fizz? Coffee and ices! Hang it all! men are not girls.'

The evening wore on, and Wynyan was watching his opportunity for a few words with Rénée, but the opportunity did not seem to come; and when at last he saw her and Miss Bryne rise to go, the Count held him fast by the coat.

'You will think about what we discussed, Mr Wynyan?' he said in his ultra-friendly way. 'You understand the kind of man we require: brain, genius, an engineer *au fait* with regard to motive powers. You will try and help me?'

'If I can, sir,' said Wynyan.

'Thank you, so much. Ah, I must go and see that dear Miss Bryne to her carriage.'

Wynyan winced, for Brant had joined his cousin, evidently with the same intent, and the opportunity was gone.

'One word, Mr Wynyan,' said the Count, bending toward him: 'think of all I said—reward, position, the love of some beautiful woman; think, Mr Wynyan, the chance of a lifetime—why not you—on your own terms?'

He gave Wynyan a peculiar look through his half-closed eyes, and then crossed quickly to where Rénée was taking her leave of her young hostess. Then she laid her hand upon Brant's arm, there was the faint rustle of her dark dress over the rich carpet, and she was gone.

'Without one look,' said Wynyan to himself, as he stood there chilled and with a sensation akin to despair creeping over him.

Then he started back to the present, as a voice said: 'Don't they make a handsome pair, Mr Wynyan?'

For a few moments he made no reply, but stood gazing in the large, dark, malicious-looking eyes which gazed into his.

'I beg your pardon,' he faltered.

'There is no need. It was perhaps rude of me, but I saw you watching them go out. But do please take me to have an ice, Mr Wynyan; I'm faint and hoarse, and quite fagged with trying to make people happy. In the next room. You'll have one too?'

But Paul Wynyan had already had his ice.

(*To be continued.*)

THE GREAT FAIRS OF RUSSIA.

In Russia, as in America, according to Sir Mackenzie Wallace, the traveller is always cross-questioned by new acquaintances as to what he thinks of the country; and after he has answered the question, he is tolerably sure to be asked whether he has seen the Great Fair of Nijni-Novgorod. Now, although Sir Mackenzie Wallace spent some years in Russia before he went to see that Fair, and then confessed himself disappointed with it, and with the absence of the Oriental colouring he expected, this particular Fair is but a type, though a leading one, of the manner in which the vast internal trade of the Russian Empire is conducted. Without some knowledge of these Fairs, it is impossible to understand the economic conditions of Russia.

It is now about twenty years since Mr (now Sir D. M.) Wallace recorded his disappointment with Nijni-Novgorod. In these twenty years Russia has developed enormously in many ways, and in no way more remarkably than in the extension of railways, and the completion of links of water-communication. Yet, Nijni-Novgorod increases rather than diminishes in commercial importance, and if not quite one of the seven wonders of the world, as it used to be regarded by patriotic Russians, is at least a prominent feature in Russian economy. And here it may be explained that the word 'Nijni' (better spelt 'Nizhni') means Lower; and thus Nijni-Novgorod is just Lower Novgorod. It is said to have been originally a colony planted on the Volga in the thirteenth century by the people of Great Novgorod, the vastly more ancient city which has been called 'the cradle of Russian history.'

But while the name of the Great Fair of Nijni-Novgorod is more or less familiar to every reader of books about Russia, and of the narratives of those who have pushed into Central Asia through the Russian lines, it is not so easy in Western Europe to understand how Fairs have retained an importance in the Empire of the Czar which they have lost almost everywhere else. According to an official investigation made some years ago, it seems that there are no fewer than 2825 Fairs held annually in Russia, at which the turn-over—although statistics could not be obtained from a considerable number of them—was valued at 577 million roubles. This was the computed value of the goods brought in for sale; and taking the rouble at three shillings, this gives an equivalent of 86½ millions sterling. In this enormous turn-over some 194,000 traders were engaged as principals.

It must not be supposed, however, that all of these 2825 Fairs rival in importance the Fair of Nijni-Novgorod. Probably about eighty per cent. of them are merely local or village Fairs, for the sale of produce by the peasants to the dealers, and of the purchase of stores, &c., from the dealers by the peasants. Of the great Fairs, the larger number are in Little Russia and the eastern region; and, as might be expected, they become smaller and less numerous the nearer the western frontiers are approached. One reason why the Fair-trade has become so large and so firmly established, is because of the want, until quite recent times, of conveniences of communication. It was not possible for local dealers to supply themselves at the points of production of the goods they dealt in. Another reason was the smallness of the circulating capital in the provinces, so that traders had not the money in hand with which to go to distant markets. Thus it came about that half-way stations were established, at which producers and dealers could meet periodically for the exchange of goods. It has been said that the Fair system has enabled Russia to a large extent to dispense with middlemen—that the manufacturers and wholesale importers are brought into direct relations with the local tradesmen, and the farmers with the millers and exporters; but how far this may be true, we have no means of knowing.

Then, again, the Fair system has flourished because of the encouragement and protection extended to it by the Government since the days of Peter the Great, who paid great attention to the Fairs, and himself instituted some, for the purpose of drawing trade from neighbouring countries. Although not free from tolls, the recognised Fairs were not subjected to the heavy inland customs duties otherwise exacted. In the eighteenth century, a percentage tax was imposed on the traders at the Fairs; but it was found so hurtful in restricting business, that in 1814 trade at all the Fairs in the Empire was proclaimed free to everybody.

Owing to the deficiency of railways, of telegraphs, and of banking facilities, the Fairs grew in importance until the middle of the present century, when they may be said to have reached their highest point of development. Then they began to change their character as the manufacturing industries of Russia developed. The Fairs mainly concerned with foreign goods lost their importance, while those in more close connection with the great towns and industrial centres gained in importance. In Little Russia there is a regular succession of Fairs following close upon one another, so that goods left unsold at one are packed up by the trader for the next, and so on. In spite of these changes and charges, goods could still be sold at the most distant Fairs at very little more than Moscow prices. This was because of the exemption from duties enjoyed by the Fair-dealers. But as railways and banks extended, these special privileges were resented as a hardship by general traders, and in 1882 it was decreed that the Fairs should be classified and taxed.

The dealers have now to provide themselves with guild-tickets and licenses, the price of which varies with the importance of the Fair. The Fairs were classified according to duration —over a month, over twenty-one days, from fifteen to twenty days, from eight to fourteen days, and under seven days. According to a St Petersburg publication before us, there is only one Fair of the first class, that of Nijni-Novgorod; but there are 47 of the second class, 59 of the third class, 291 of the fourth class, and 2500 of the fifth class, which last is exempt from taxation. The dues from the four classes bring in the Government a revenue averaging 332,000 roubles per annum. The return shows that while the revenue from the frontier Fairs has decreased since 1884, that from the others has increased. On the whole, however, it would seem that what may be called the open mercantile trade of Russia has increased during the last ten years at the expense of the Fairs.

So much as to the general system; and now let us take a look at the special features.

Although the Fair of Nijni-Novgorod has only been located there since 1816, it is one of the oldest Fairs in Russia. It was held formerly at Makariev, and previous to that, at Vassel-Sursk; and it originated at the time when Kazan was a kingdom, and merchants from Russia went there to trade. Some of these merchants were put to death at one of the Kazan Fairs early in the sixteenth century; and in 1524 the Grand-duke Vassili Ivanovich forbade the Moscow traders to go any more into Kazan. For their accommodation he established a Fair on the boundary of the kingdom of Moscow, at Vassel-Sursk, on the Volga; but it failed to attract trade from Kazan; and in the following century the Fair was removed to Makariev, which is some eighty versts below Nijni-Novgorod. It was after a fire at Makariev in 1816 that the Fair was removed to Nijni-Novgorod; but it is still known in Russia as the Makariev Fair.

Nijni-Novgorod, however, is very favourably situated for an entrepôt—just at the junction of the Volga and the Oka, with easy water-communication with a large portion of the Empire. The Volga, and its affiliated water-ways, passes right through the industrial districts, and connects with St Petersburg, where is a great grain-market; and its lower courses give connection with the Urals and Siberia, with the Caspian Sea, the Caucasus, and Persia. The Oka, again, gives connection with the great wheat-growing area, and a railway gives connection with Moscow. Thus it is that Nijni-Novgorod occupies a unique geographical position, enabling it to do a large trade; and this is why this famous Fair occupies so important a place in the commercial economy of Russia. To quote the official document mentioned above: 'The central industrial governments send their manufactured goods to the Fair; the Urals, their metals; Siberia despatches furs, skins, wax, oil, and tallow; the Kama, salt; the Lower Volga, fish; the Caucasus, naphtha products (petroleum) and wine; Central Asia, cotton and lamb-skins; Persia, fruits; China, tea; the South-western region, sugar; Little Russia, tobacco; the middle Volga governments, corn, timber, and certain other goods; and Western Europe, manufactured and colonial goods, and wine. A vast number of people congregate at the Fair; on the average there are about two hundred thousand visitors.'

Here Asia and Europe meet; but Asia is not, as is often supposed, predominant. On the contrary, the Asiatic traders form but a small percentage, and the chief operations are in the sales of manufactured goods to merchants for distribution among the smaller inland towns. In former days, Nijni-Novgorod used to supply the greater part of Russia with the leading articles of consumption; but the extension of railways has destroyed a good deal of the trade. The Asiatics who bring in their products usually take away manufactured goods in exchange; but they also take corn more frequently than they used to do. It will be a surprise to many to learn that the greater part of the operations at the Fair are done on credit, and that the bills granted run from six to twelve months, and sometimes longer. With some traders it is the practice to make the bills mature at the period of the Irbit Fair, at which they may realise their purchases in cash. The Nijni-Novgorod Fair opens on the 15th of July, and for wholesale transactions lasts until the 25th of August; so that, while it is in active operation, the results of the harvest—which have a great bearing upon the volume of trade—are known. The wholesale Fair is followed by a retail one, which lasts until September 10.

This great Fair is not only the largest in Russia, but probably the largest trading gathering in the world. Its operations affect the whole course of Russian internal trade for the succeeding twelve months, and therefore, as a sort of commercial barometer, it is every year carefully studied by economists and financiers. The turn-over in the first year of the transfer to Nijni-Novgorod was only twenty-five million roubles. Within thirty years the amount was doubled; and in each decade there was increase by leaps and bounds until, in 1881, the turn-over was no less than 246 millions. Since then, there has, with some ups and downs, been a decrease; and in 1891 the record was only 168 millions. The cause of this decline is said to be the completion of the Trans-Caspian Railway, by which trade can now be carried on with Central Asia through most of the year. The goods which in the last decade show increase, as compared with previous records of the Fair, are linen and flax, furs, skins and leather, metals and articles made from them, fish, tea, Bokharan and Khivan products, and Chinese goods. All other articles, especially the products of Western Europe, make a much smaller figure than formerly.

Next in importance is the Irbit Fair, which is held at Irbit, in the province of Perm, between the 1st of February and the 1st of March. This Fair is not on the great trading route between Russia and Siberia, and yet it is at Irbit that Siberia is supplied with manufactured goods for the year, and to which Siberia sends a large portion of her furs, skins, fish, honey, wax, hempseed, linseed, and even butter. Here, too, is a great market for Chinese tea and silk, and for many products of Central Asia. Most of the goods left unsold from the Nijni-Novgorod Fair are sent on to Irbit; and Siberian goods left unsold from the Irbit Fair are, in turn, sent on to Nijni-Novgorod. For Russian goods the traders enjoy some special privileges for carriage from Fair to Fair.

The Irbit Fair dates from 1643; but up to the beginning of the present century had not exceeded a turn-over of two million roubles per annum. In 1863, however, it had grown to 50 millions; and in 1887 it reached 57 millions, which was the high-water mark. By 1892 the turn-over had declined to 34 million roubles; and this Fair is expected to suffer a good deal from the Trans-Siberian Railway, now in course of construction, which will take Siberian grain and furs and other products direct on to the Russian railway system. Irbit itself is but a small place of 5000 inhabitants; but during the Fair the population rises to 100,000, and many of the houses are open only while the Fair lasts.

Other important Fairs in Eastern Russia are those of Sbornaya, Menzelinsk, and Ivanovsk. The Sbornaya Fair is held at Simbirsk during the first and second weeks of Lent. It was here that, before the railways, the provinces of Orenburg, Ufa, and Samara obtained their supplies; now, however, its custom is more confined to the surrounding districts.

The chief manufactures disposed of at this Fair are cotton goods; but it is also a great grain-market, and its operations practically decide the price of grain upon the Volga as soon as the navigation opens. The turn-over is about six and a half million roubles per annum.

The Menzelinsk Fair is in Ufa, and is held between the 26th of December and the 11th of January. Its leading articles are cottons and skins; but the extension of the railway to Zlatoust has curtailed its importance, and the turn-over has within the last twenty years fallen from six and a half to four and a half million roubles.

What is known as the Ivanovsk Fair is held at Masliansk, in Perm, during the month of August. Here also cottons and skins are the chief objects of trade; but the Tartar and Kirghiz traders also bring in large quantities of Central-Asian goods. This Fair continues to hold its own, and the present turn-over, nearly six million roubles, is somewhat larger than it was twenty years ago.

There is also an important Siberian winter Fair held at Ishim in December, at which goods to the value of four and a half to five million roubles are disposed of. And there are great Fairs at Akmolinsk, to which cattle are brought from the provinces and the Khanates, and at which general goods are sold to the Kirghiz. In the far-away Transbaikal province there is also a considerable Fair; as also at Irkutsk, and even at remote Yakutsk, where as much as one and a half millions of roubles will be turned over in the short season. At Astrakhan is another Fair for the Kirghiz trade, principally for cattle, with a turn-over of about two and a half million roubles. And at Archangel is a Fair for fish, furs, and skins.

In the central portions of Russia there are a large number of small Fairs with a turn-over of from half a million to a million roubles. They are not individually important, but the aggregate trade is large. In Little Russia are what are called the Ukraine Fairs, survivals of the time before the region was absorbed in the Empire, when Poles, Russians, Greeks, and Germans used to meet annually for barter. At Kharkov are held four; at Romny, four; and at Poltava one, of these Fairs—following one after the other during the year. The trade at them is now chiefly in manufactured goods, which are passed on from Fair to Fair until disposed of. The aggregate turn-over of these Ukraine Fairs appears to be about thirty million roubles per annum. The Troitsk Fair in June and the Ouspensk Fair in August—both held at Kharkov—are the chief wool Fairs of Little Russia.

At Kiev is held, from the 5th to the 26th of February, what is known as the Contract Fair, at which the agriculturists, sugar-manufacturers, and merchants of the district meet, and where the dealings are in sugar, corn, land, and building contracts.

In the Don province there are a number of cattle Fairs; and in Podolia are the principal horse Fairs. At Warsaw there is an important annual wool Fair, which is largely attended by foreigners; and in September there is at the same place a special Fair for hops.

To enumerate all the smaller Fairs is, of course, impossible. Our object has been merely to indicate the features of the more important of these centres of Russian internal trade, and to give an idea of the commerce they represent. In conclusion, we may repeat the inferences drawn in the official Report from which we have obtained our figures: 'That the growth of the Fair-trade in Russia was chiefly assisted by the absence of convenient ways of communication; that the closing of the river-ways during several months of the year was more favourable to the growth of a Fair-trade than a settled one; that the Fair-trade is generally in a transitional condition; and that certain Fairs are even on the decline; while the settled trade, taking advantage of the perfected ways of communication, and especially of the railways, is gradually developing at the expense of the Fair-trade; but that the Nijni-Novgorod Fair can hardly lose its importance, although it has stopped in its growth, owing to the special position which it occupies in the economic life of Russia.'

THE RISE AND FALL OF RELIGION AT DUXBURY SWAMP.

A WESTERN EPISODE.

By WILLIAM ATKINSON.

THE Right Reverend Anthony Briggs, Doctor of Divinity and Bishop of the Western territorial diocese of Cheyenne, although a learned ecclesiastic, and an energetic up-builder of the church on the plains, would undoubtedly have ill-become a garden party at Lambeth, and would scarcely have 'adorned,' so far as personal appearance was concerned, the episcopal bench of the House of Lords; while in the chancel of some ancient minster he would surely have been deemed an irreconcilable anachronism. For no rich broadcloth draped the six feet two inches of scrawny frame which belonged to Dr Briggs; and the traditional hat, apron, and gaiters which help to lend antiquity, dignity, and prestige to an English Lord Bishop were conspicuous by their absence from the person of the Right Reverend Anthony Briggs.

To write more positively, the Bishop of Cheyenne usually attired himself in a dark-blue cheviot suit of stout texture, a broad-brimmed soft felt hat, and high boots, and spent most of his waking hours astride a Texas pony, athwart which faithful animal he also carried saddle-bags, in which were packed his canonical robes, and likewise a holster containing a pair of formidable-looking pistols.

For Bishop Briggs's diocese was on and beyond the 'frontier'—which is to say the frontier of railroads, schools, churches, and other evidences of modern, well-developed civilisation—and was co-extensive with a territory far larger than the entire province of Canterbury. Yet the good bishop's immense field of labour did not, as a whole, lie heavily upon his mind and heart. True, while the scattered harvest was plentiful, the labourers were few, and the means wherewith to pay these few labourers was exceedingly diminutive. But the bishop was not narrow-minded, and if he found none of his own clergy at work in a town or settlement, he usually discovered a Methodist preacher or a Baptist minister, or, perchance, a Roman Catholic priest covering the ground, which satisfied him that the people need not be or long remain entirely heathen.

Yes, the Right Reverend Anthony Briggs was fairly well satisfied with the condition of the broad diocese of Cheyenne, except that portion of it known as Duxbury Swamp; and that was —'another story!' Speaking from a strictly geographical standpoint, Duxbury Swamp, so called, was no swamp at all, being, as a matter of fact, an exceedingly fertile tract of land, surrounded, for the greater part of the year, by two arms (forming a loop) of a stream of clear water. Certainly, for a short period of each summer, ordinarily known as the dry season, the stream of clear water failed to materialise in the vicinity of Duxbury Swamp, and the bed of the Dux Creek became what, perhaps, originally gave the name to the land which it encircled—namely, a marsh or swamp. At any rate, whether ice or water or marsh, the immediate environment of Duxbury Swamp formed a natural boundary such as may have been utilised by bygone races of Indians for defensive purposes in troublous times. Indeed, Dux Creek still served such a purpose. For if Duxbury Swamp could not be correctly described by those words of the well-known hymn:

Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile,

it might at least be said that its nine or ten thousand fertile acres supported a population the male portion of which would not have very freely invited an investigation into the records of their lives prior to their arrival and settlement at Duxbury Swamp. To be more explicit, Duxbury Swamp had the reputation of being a rendezvous for all sorts and conditions of offenders against the laws of all and sundry of the United States of America.

Duxbury Swampers were 'dead leery' of all strangers, and especially took pains to discourage visits from officers of the law—and parsons; and to the few non-residents of Duxbury Swamp who had gained access to the place, its social life was an unguessed conundrum. The fields were well tilled, the houses were substantially built and comfortable, the stores (of which there were three or four) seemed to do a fair business, and, notwithstanding the air of mystery which pervaded the settlement, prosperity seemed to reign in all directions. All the men drove good horses in the latest styles of buggies and wagons. They likewise drank good whisky, while the women folks seemed to be well supplied with everything that was going in the way of millinery, wraps, and other 'dry goods.' Notwithstanding which, there was neither school-house, newspaper, nor library to benefit the Swampers; and it is almost needless to add, therefore, that the 'church' had no foothold on Duxbury Swamp, which regrettable state of affairs greatly grieved our right reverend friend, the good bishop of the diocese.

We make the acquaintance of Dr Briggs on a bright fall day about a decade ago. With his own face and his horse's head held straight towards a westering sun, he was making his way to the mushroom city of Cheyenne, where was to be held the annual diocesan convention—at which periodical ecclesiastical gathering Bishop Briggs was privileged to meet the two or three score faithful men who formed the rank and file of his small army. As the good bishop jogs along the bridal path, upon which the title of *road* was conferred by brevet, we may divulge a little of his early history. It goes, of course, without saying that Bishop Briggs was not always a bishop, nor was he always a clergyman; more than that, when a young man at college, Anthony Briggs was not even designed to take holy orders. At his university, young Briggs was noted by the professors as an exceedingly bright and promising student—as proficient in his studies as his college chum and friend, David Morrisson, was in all athletic pursuits. During their term at college the expression 'Briggs and Morrisson' meant more to the undergraduates than the story of Damon and Pythias. The two young men were inseparable, and, while totally different in ideas and temperament, each was a great help to the other. Morrisson could never have graduated from the university without the persistent friendly aid of Briggs and, minus the encouragement of Morrisson, Briggs would scarcely ever have indulged in physical exercise, and certainly would never have attained the honour and distinction of pulling an oar with the 'varsity crew.

Yet, though their college lives were so closely interwoven, on-lookers wondered at the strange friendship. David Morrisson forced his way to the front in the various athletic clubs and societies by sheer animal strength, and he actually had few friends; while, on the other hand, young Briggs was really beloved by all who came in contact with him. His nature was open and trusting, and he could not believe ill of anybody, let alone a friend. It was on account of this good-nature, perhaps, that Anthony Briggs, having graduated from his college and also from the university law-school, finding himself engaged to a charming young lady, commended her to the attention and watchful care of his friend Morrisson, while he went on a tour around the world before settling down to the active duties of life. It was a stunning blow to Anthony Briggs, on returning to his home one year later, to find that the chum and friend whom he had loved and trusted second only to the girl he would have married, had eloped with his *fiancée* a day or two before his arrival. As is often the case under such circumstances, a great revulsion of feeling came over the gentle nature of Anthony Briggs, and he swore a solemn and fearful oath that, should he ever overtake his false friend, he would visit swift and terrible revenge upon Morrisson for his baseness. But, strange to relate, as the weeks and months passed by, merging themselves into years and even into decades, not a word came to Anthony Briggs of the man and woman who had largely blighted his happiness. In the meantime, Briggs sought some relief by changing the plans for his life's work, and renounced the bar for the church. In church work he became an enthusiast, and after many years of efficient labour in various parishes of the Eastern cities, he was designated for missionary work in the far West, and was ultimately consecrated Bishop of Cheyenne.

But Anthony Briggs never married, because all his love for a woman had been lavished upon Eleanor Waldorf; and he never more cultivated warm and close friendship for a man, because he never forgot the faithlessness of David Morrisson.

This was the eighth or ninth annual convention that was now called to order in the little frame church which stood in the place of a cathedral to our right reverend friend—a church so small that the less than three-score clergyman now assembled therein pretty well taxed its seating capacity. After the opening prayers had been said, and some routine business transacted, the bishop made his annual address to his clergy, and closed it by an eloquent appeal for a volunteer to undertake the cure of souls at Duxbury Swamp. Before him the bishop saw in that little throng a variety of men: some were young, and some were old; some were vigorous, and some were becoming feeble; there were high-churchmen and low-churchmen; while others had very little churchmanship—but more than atoned for the deficiency by a great deal of common sense, and earnest love for the race. Yet it certainly surprised the bishop when a response to his call came from a clergyman who was perhaps, physically, the least fit to undertake any very arduous work. This was the Reverend John Caldecott, a young ritualistic enthusiast recently from one of the Oxford 'settlements' in East London; and, as young Caldecott was a new arrival in the diocese and unattached, he set forth immediately at the close of the convention to take charge of his new parish of Duxbury Swamp.

What Ratcliffe Highway is to London and the 'Tenderloin' district is to New York, Duxbury Swamp was to the territory which formed the diocese of Cheyenne; only, as that territory was, at its best, rough enough to induce all men to carry two or three weapons concealed upon their persons, the possibilities of the

Swampers may better be imagined than described.

As a college student, John Caldecott had cast in his lot with that section of the Church of England which, however much we may differ on question of doctrine and churchmanship, we must admire on account of the enthusiasm with which its followers appear to be imbued. So thoroughly in earnest was John Caldecott, that nothing could turn him from his set purpose, when once his pathway seemed to him to be the path of duty. Three years before, he had refused a 'gilt-edged' Devonshire living to accept an arduous post in East London; and now, when the physicians had positively forbidden his longer remaining in the vitiated air of Whitechapel and Poplar, he had come out to the Far West, that in exchange for fresh air he might give the church still more energetic service.

Duxbury Swamp was a decidedly new experience for John Caldecott. Out by the London docks he had been met with utter indifference, or at most by jeers and sneers; but the Swampers offered active resistance to his settlement among them.

His approach had evidently been heralded, for when he crossed the creek in his rough buckboard wagon, and landed in Duxbury Swamp, a deputation of three determined-looking men met him.

'Su'thing to sell?' asked one.

'Not anything.'

'Wanter buy su'thing?' inquired another.

'Nothing.'

'Parson, I persume?' said the third.

'Exactly,' said Caldecott, with a pleasant smile.

'Well, we don't take kindly to sech, and they don't have no real and generwine love for we-uns. Fact is, stranger, we ain't got no use for no doggoned parsons!'

'That's keerect,' echoed one of the deputation, while the third, being of a still more practical disposition, turned the horse's head, and gave the animal a sharp slap with his open hand.

'Good-bye, parson,' they all shouted, with a grin.

'I shall come back,' called back Caldecott, nothing daunted.

'Don't you do it, not if you know what's good for a parson's pelt!' the chief spokesman called by way of a parting shot.

But bright and early the next morning the Reverend John Caldecott was found away up in the centre of Duxbury Swamp!

What was more to the purpose, Caldecott was away up in the good graces of the most important and influential inhabitant of the Swamp—a character known locally as Colonel Dixey.

The young clergyman, after his unceremonious ejection on the previous day, had re-entered Duxbury Swamp on foot, under cover of the night; and when the sun arose, bringing with it a hungry feeling within John Caldecott's stomach, that energetic pioneer of religion found himself outside a picket fence, which enclosed, together with many broad acres of rich farm land, a roomy, home-like, clap-boarded mansion—painted white, with green venetian shutters—that looked for all the world as if it had been transported bodily from beneath the elms of some Massachusetts village.

John Caldecott fully realised the fact that he was at Duxbury Swamp for the explicit purpose of making the acquaintance of the Swampers; but his hungry feeling prompted him to attempt that work of introduction as quickly as possible—and he sincerely hoped for the best results.

Nor was he disappointed.

Before the clergyman had advanced half-way up the well-kept walk, the door of the house opened, and there stepped upon the low, broad porch a man who was a giant in size, and who appeared to be, from his erect carriage and the massiveness of his limbs, a veritable tower of strength. At first, Caldecott put him down for a man of forty years; but as he approached more closely, it was plain to see, by the crow's-feet, and the fast-whitening hair and moustache, that sixty years was nearer the mark.

'Good-morning, sir,' said Caldecott, who quickly arrived at the conclusion that this man was more worthy of respect than the three nondescripts who had driven him away the night before.

'Good-morning, sir, to you,' was the polite and even cordial response. 'This is a sight for sore eyes and an unexpected pleasure. More than thirty years have I made my home here, and you are the first parson who has graced my house. Come inside, sir.'

'The idea of a wolf appearing in sheep's clothing does not appear to cross your mind,' suggested Caldecott, to whom a civil greeting was a great surprise.

'No,' was the reply. 'The fact is that I have had such a wide experience with wolves of all sorts that I can identify them in all disguises. I can, *per contra*, sir, tell the genuine article when I see it, and I shall be glad, for a treat, to have a gentleman share my breakfast. It will be ready at six o'clock, which will be in just five minutes. Ha! ha!—Now excuse what seems rudeness, my dear sir,' said the big man, laughing heartily as John Caldecott handed him a relic of Oxford in the form of a calling-card, 'but I'll venture to lay odds that this is the first copperplate card which was ever handed out in Duxbury Swamp! Good! Er—"Reverend John Caldecott"—'Piscopal, I suppose, Mr Caldecott? So much the better, because I can take up religion where I dropped it nearly two-score years ago. Well, sir, my name is Dixey, David Dixey—and there's the breakfast bell, Mr Caldecott.'

The meal to which Caldecott sat down was as inviting as his host's house, and the parson did it justice. Afterwards they sat together upon the spacious veranda, and while Dixey smoked, our friend asked a number of questions relating to Duxbury Swamp and its people.

'Fact is, Mr Caldecott, they're a pretty tough lot hereabouts,' said Dixey. 'For myself, I don't want to sail under false colours. I'm here because public opinion would have driven me away from the East sooner or later, so I came "sooner." Don't be too fearful now, my dear sir; I never broke the law of the land, and am not "wanted" by the police. I came out here over thirty years ago with the sweetest woman you ever saw—fact is, I stole her; but she didn't mind that, and we lived happily for just two years, when she and her new-born babe died. There's the grave, where you see yonder white headstone under that soft maple. I might have gone back to civilisation had she lived, Mr Caldecott, but after *that* happened I just stayed right here, and have remained hidden from all my friends, who, doubtless, have long since forgotten my existence. Now, most of these people around me are no better than they should be, and the rest are a great deal worse than the law permits. But what *I* say "goes," and although I hold no office whatever from the local government, I'm the only man in the Swamp who can maintain a semblance of order and decency. I'm not religious, Mr Caldecott, but I'll give religion its due. It's a fine thing to have, and it generally makes men and women live respectable lives. So for a good many months past it has been on my mind that I ought to get a parson out here on the Swamp, and build a bit of a church, so that these poor wretches, and especially their children who are growing up, may at least have a chance to learn something better than gambling, horse-stealing, and boozing. But I actually didn't know who to approach, and I got to reasoning that if the Lord really cared two straws about Duxbury Swamp, He'd most likely send a parson this way when He got good and ready. It certainly begins to look as if my theory was correct, for here we are, Mr Caldecott; and if you can get along with my house for a while, we'll put up a church of some kind as soon as it can be done.'

Caldecott was delighted, and the result of this chance acquaintance was that, it being Saturday, several placards were written by the clergyman in a bold hand which Dixey caused to be tacked upon sundry fences and trees throughout the settlement of Duxbury Swamp.

The notice itself announcing Sunday services was framed on a unique model, but excited no surprise at Duxbury Swamp—and it served its purpose.

There was a large crowd at John Caldecott's first service, but after the novelty wore off, only the women and children attended. The men did not take to this particular phase of civilisation. They looked upon the parson and his preaching as an unwelcome innovation thrust upon them against their will, though none of them cared to offend Dixey by telling him so, and only the very worst element of the Swamp population attempted by word or deed to make it unpleasant for the minister.

By-and-by a neat church was erected and suitably furnished; which, with Dixey's influential backing, satisfied, for the time being, John Caldecott, who was quite prepared and willing to exercise his soul in patience, feeling assured that in time the little leaven would leaven the whole lump.

It was not long, however, before the sheriff of the straggling county in which Duxbury Swamp is located heard about the church and its energetic pastor, and swore big oaths that if a 'derned parson' could get a foothold in that 'hell hole,' it wasn't decent for a sheriff to stay away longer; and further swore that the next man in the Swamp that he 'wanted,' he proposed to take, dead or alive.

This announcement on the part of the sheriff soon reached the ears of the vagabond Swampers, and their feelings toward the church (and especially toward Dixey) became more pronounced and vindictive. The three ruffians who had endeavoured to frustrate Caldecott's missionary plans at the outset encouraged this feeling by the oft-repeated statement, 'We told you so!' and, in turn, the outlaws of Duxbury Swamp vowed that if the sheriff should ever make good his word, the church, together with Caldecott and his 'backer,' would suffer.

Sheriff Ryan *did*, shortly afterwards, raid the Swamp, and captured one Ned McCusker for circulating new silver dollars *not* manufactured at the United States Mints; and if Mr McCusker's friends, allies, and confederates did not at once carry out their programme, it was possibly because most of them found it convenient to hie them, temporarily, into quarters beyond the sheriff's jurisdiction.

The date of Sheriff Ryan's raid was of threefold interest to the Reverend John Caldecott, now fairly established clergyman, for in addition to that startling occurrence, it was the anniversary of his arrival at Duxbury Swamp; and, chiefest of the three circumstances, he received by the tri-weekly mail a postal card from Bishop Briggs, with greetings, and also with a notice that he would make his episcopal visitation in three weeks, when he would be pleased to lay hands upon any candidates desiring the rite of confirmation whom Mr Caldecott might present.

Of course it was very good and kind of the bishop to remember such an outlying and unimportant parish as Duxbury Swamp, and of course John Caldecott and his rather indifferent flock would appreciate a visit from the chief pastor of the diocese; but as to a confirmation class—well, yes, the parson had one candidate in the person of 'Colonel' Dixey. So preparations were made for the bishop's visit.

Now it happened that the identical October morning which saw the Right Reverend Anthony Briggs, D.D., on his Texas pony approaching Duxbury Swamp from the north, saw also three or four hard-looking citizens tramping towards the same goal from the south. They were the men who had thought it discreet to hide for a time from the sheriff; and the first news they heard upon their arrival at their old haunts was that 'that doggoned Dixey was agoing to jine the church.'

'That settles it!' said Ned McCusker's former partner—the response to which remark was a deep and ominous growl.

The little church of St Chrysostom, notwithstanding that it was eight o'clock in the forenoon of a week-day, was crowded to the door—with women and children; the men of Duxbury Swamp were conspicuous by their absence—the tough element looking upon the candidate for confirmation as a traitor to all the time-honoured traditions of the Swamp, as well as the prime mover in a state of affairs that had brought the sheriff boldly into their midst: the rest of the adult males considered the act of 'jining the church'—any church—as unbecoming any other than a woman or a lunatic; so none of them countenanced the proceedings of the day at St Chrysostom's by their presence.

But the church was crowded, and on one of the front benches sat 'Colonel' Dixey, his gray head bent and his broad shoulders conspicuous above the hats and bonnets of the women.

The bishop, who had arrived on the previous evening, and had spent the night with Caldecott at his lodgings, was tardy in his appearance, and when he did reach the church, he hastily donned his rather shabby robes, and, preceded by Caldecott, at once entered the tiny chancel.

The bishop, evidently tired after his long journey on horseback, sat with his head bowed, while Caldecott went through the order of morning prayer, and scarce changed his position when the rector presented, rather pathetically, his solitary candidate for confirmation.

Then this tall and angular dignitary of the church arose and faced the equally tall but much stouter postulant.

'Dost thou here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew'——

Suddenly Bishop Briggs started, turned deathly pale, and paused.

For he recognised in the man before him his old college chum and only enemy, David Morrisson; and Morrisson, knowing that he was recognised, never flinched.

Dixey—or Morrisson, rather—had looked for this moment. He had expected it, had indeed sought it, and had hoped that the recognition would come. He had prepared himself to accept and shoulder the consequences, whatever they might be.

But with Anthony Briggs it was far different. He was momentarily overwhelmed by a flood of bitter memories, and not even his surroundings or the dignity and sacredness of his office could prevent the fearful conflict which almost impelled him to seize this man by the throat. The suppressed anger of over thirty years arose within him, and the wrong of a lifetime seemed to call for swift vengeance even at the very altar. But by a tremendous effort the bishop kept his hands clasped before him: he could not bring scandal upon the church, nor could he afford to spoil the work of John Caldecott in this new parish, or blur the record of his own thirty years' reproachless ministry. Wearing those priestly robes, he was a priest with a priestly mission to perform. Afterwards, when he should have disrobed—afterwards, beyond the walls of the sacred edifice—afterwards——

Mechanically, and as one in a dream, he proceeded with the confirmation office. Probably, measured by a watch, the pause had not lasted two seconds: measured by the two men who so strangely faced each other, a lifetime had been reviewed.

Morrisson knelt upon the altar step; the bishop raised his hands and brought them tremblingly together upon the head of his old enemy.

'Defend, O Lord, this thy servant with thy heavenly grace; that he may continue thine for ever; and'——

There was a crash of broken glass at one of the windows, followed by the rattle and bang of pistol-shots, and at the same instant there was a heavy thud as David Morrisson fell dead before the altar.

The outlaw neighbours of the 'Colonel' were avenged—and so was Anthony Briggs.

But the cause of religion received a set-back at Duxbury Swamp from which it has not yet recovered.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

The construction of a perfect railway-carriage window is a task which seems as yet to have baffled inventors. Some of them refuse to move when once raised or lowered, others give access to a cutting draught, and most of them rattle in a most noisy manner as the train proceeds. A simplified form of window, which seems to do away with these inconveniences, has been devised by Mr W. R. Pape of Newcastle, who is the inventor of the choke bore for sporting-guns. The Pape window has attached by arms to the lower part of the frame a couple of rollers, made of brass tube covered with india-rubber. As the window is drawn up or down, these rollers revolve against each other, and exclude all draughts and cold air. It is possible also by their aid to fix the window at any point required, the usual leather strap being altogether dispensed with. The only point about which we feel doubtful is the employment of india-rubber, for rubber will not stand such extremes of temperature as a railway carriage is exposed to. Possibly some preparation of cellulose would better answer the purpose.

It is not generally known that stone, like wood, requires a period of seasoning, if we are to expect the most lasting results from its use. Stone, as it comes from the living rock, is far from having the stability with which it is credited. It has recently been pointed out in the *Scientific American*, that while a cubic foot of compact granite will weigh about one hundred and sixty-four pounds, the same bulk of iron will weigh three hundred pounds more. This clearly shows that the particles composing this granite are separated by air-spaces in which moisture can collect. Every good architect knows that the seasoning of stone is necessary, and it may be that the quick deterioration of some of our modern buildings is due to neglect of this precaution.

The light-weight, rapid-fire Maxim gun, as recently improved, is a terrible instrument of destruction, and places in the hands of one man a means of wholesale slaughter which is positively awful to contemplate. The gun weighs complete, with all necessary fittings, only forty-five pounds—that is, one-fifth of the weight of a sack of coals—and can therefore be easily carried on a man's back. When in use, the gun is mounted upon a tripod stand, and it will fire from six to seven hundred shots per minute, at an effective range of nearly two miles. The long range of modern arms generally will, it is believed, render necessary some modified regulations as to the treatment of the wounded on the field of battle. During the recent Chino-Japanese war, the casualties among medical men and others tending the wounded amounted to the extraordinary proportion of four per cent. of the entire total. It will be a difficult matter to convey wounded men farther to the rear than at present; but this must be done, or the doctors must run almost as much risk as the active combatants.

Mr Charles Davison of Birmingham is compiling a history of British Earthquakes during the nineteenth century, and is anxious for any items which may contribute to its completeness. Most persons in this country have, happily, but a vague idea what an earthquake shock is like, although plenty of minor disturbances of the kind have been recorded. The most remarkable event of the kind which has occurred within recent years was the earthquake which shook the eastern counties, and was distinctly felt in London in April 1884. This shock was powerful enough to bring down a church-steeple at Colchester, and to wreck hundreds of roofs and chimneys. In 1868 there was a shock which was graphically described by Charles Dickens 'as if a big dog was under the bed, and trying to raise it with its back.' Going back to earlier times, we find that, in 1750, London was for some weeks in a state of panic owing to earthquake alarms. The year 1580 also stands out as being memorable for an earthquake which set all the metropolitan church bells ringing, and brought down masses of stone from some of their towers.

A curious exhibition has recently been given in London under the title 'Colour Music,' which is defined as a new art. Its promoter starts with the assumption that there is a complete analogy between sound and light; that as both are produced by vibrations, the spectrum can be split up, like the musical octave, into so many distinct parts, and that the colour of each of those parts may be associated with a particular note. Thus C will be red, and its octave, with double the number of vibrations, will be violet. By means of a keyed instrument, in which each key causes a certain colour to be projected upon a screen by a lantern, various tints are made to blend together, while at the same time a musical instrument furnishes the corresponding sounds. The theory is an ingenious one, but it will not bear scientific scrutiny.

According to the *Chemical Trade Journal*, the supply of gutta-percha promises to be far more certain than heretofore, owing to an improved method of extracting the gum. It has hitherto been the custom to cut down a tree in order to secure its valuable produce, a tree of from twenty-five to thirty years' growth yielding about one catty of gutta-percha. This procedure is equivalent to killing the goose which lays the golden eggs. M. Hourant, of Sarawak, has adopted the new plan of plucking the leaves and extracting the gum from them, in which case the product is purer and more plentiful than under the old destructive system. It has also been found that saplings from the roots of trees already cut down are serviceable in yielding leaves for after treatment.

The Select Committee which has been inquiring into the question of our existing weights and measures, and any desirable changes which might be introduced into them, have issued their Report, in which they recommend the adoption of the metrical system; and they believe that this course would greatly tend to make that method universal. They recommend 'that the metrical system of weights and measures be at once legalised for all purposes; that after the lapse of two years the metrical system be rendered compulsory by Act of Parliament; that the metrical system be taught in all elementary schools as a necessary and integral part of arithmetic; and that decimals be introduced at an earlier period of the school curriculum than is the case at present.' The sooner these recommendations are carried into effect, the better for the commerce of this country; but experience teaches that the Report of a Select Committee, however valuable it may be, is not very quickly followed by parliamentary endorsement.

Most forms of incandescent gas-lamps, and nearly all jets used for heating or cooking, depend primarily upon the Bunsen form of burner which utilises a mixture of gas and air, and gives the familiar blue flame. A great improvement in such burners has recently been patented by M. Denayrouze, the new method consisting in providing a means of mixing more intimately the particles of gas and air before they come to the point of combustion. In the first form of Denayrouze lamp this was brought about by means of a fan worked by clockwork or electricity; but now the device has been simplified by inserting in the lower part of the lamp an Archimedean screw which churns up the mixture of gas and air, and is worked by a fan set in motion by the heated air which proceeds from the lamp itself. The light and heat are said to be almost doubled by this device, and sanguine hopes are entertained regarding its importance to gas consumers.

Another great improvement is indicated in Duke's method of automatically lighting gas-burners, which will be welcomed by all—except, perhaps, the manufacturers of matches. Many ways of lighting gas have been devised, most of them being based upon the possibility of causing an electric spark to pass or a wire to become heated by electricity in the neighbourhood of the issuing gas; but this is a purely chemical method, and the sole apparatus required is a small attachment to the ordinary burner. This consists of a tube about one inch in length, carrying at its top a plug of porous material, in the interstices of which finely divided platinum (platinum black) has been deposited. From the centre of the cap projects a thin platinum wire which is bent over towards the orifice in the burner. Directly the gas-tap is turned on, the platinum black begins to glow, its incandescence being aided by the draught of air created in its tube. The attached wire becomes white hot, and the gas ignites. The invention has been cleverly thought out, and is sure to meet with universal recognition. It will not only do away with the employment of matches for gas-lighting, but will obviate the use of pilot-lights and bye-passes.

A curious and historic ceremony took place recently at Fécamp, a well-known watering-place in Normandy. Here once stood the abbey at which the widely celebrated liqueur *Bénédictine* was first manufactured in 1510 by the Monte Vincelli. At first, the cordial, which has since become so famous, was used by the monks as a restorative when over-fatigued, and they carried it on their visits to the sick as a valuable medicine. In this way it soon became popular, and the virtues of the delicious liqueur were extolled far and wide. At the outbreak of the French Revolution the unfortunate monks were forced to leave their beloved abbey, which was destroyed by the mob, all but the noble church. In this way the manufacture of Bénédictine, after a reputation extending over three centuries, came to an abrupt end. But in 1862 M. A. Le Grand became possessed of the archives of the late abbey, and found among them a paper yellowed with age upon which was some faint writing. This proved to be the secret recipe, which had been so jealously and successfully guarded by the monks in past times, by which Bénédictine was compounded. A company was immediately formed by the energetic discoverer of the secret, and the manufacture of Bénédictine once more started on a sound commercial basis. The distillery was destroyed by fire three years ago, and Fécamp has just been inaugurating the new buildings raised above its ashes.

It has been jokingly said that if a railway director were carried in front of every engine, there would be no more collisions. In the same way it might be asserted that, if a yacht with seven members of the House of Commons on board were steered direct for a floating derelict, something would quickly be done by Parliament to remove or destroy those perils of the sea. And this object lesson in derelicts has actually been given to seven members of our legislature, one of whom, writing to the *Times*, described how 'we came upon a wooden derelict of about two hundred and fifty tons right in our track. Had we come upon this great danger of the deep but a few hours sooner (the incident occurred at nine o'clock in the morning), in all probability none of us would have been alive to tell the tale.' Curiously enough, the object lesson was given to those best qualified to measure the great danger incurred, for of the seven members of Parliament on board the yacht, three were shipowners, and two were shipbuilders, whilst among the remainder of the party was an admiral.

At the Dairy Conference held lately in Lancashire, an important paper on the milk-supply of towns was read by Mr C. Middleton, a well-known dairy-farmer. He tells us that hitherto the dairy-farmer has not suffered like his brethren the corn-growers or the cattle-raisers, for the price of milk has not fallen like that of other farm-produce. But there are indications that this will not last. Unscrupulous traders are selling separated milk as whole milk; and in London alone, it is stated upon good authority, thousands of gallons are thus disposed of daily to the injury of the honest dealers. Margarine and similar mixtures are largely sold as butter, so reducing the selling value of the genuine article. Frozen milk is being imported from Sweden, and fresh milk from Holland; other countries are preparing to follow suit, and this trade may at any moment assume enormous dimensions. There is no examination of this foreign milk, and the consumer has no means of knowing whether it is free from the germs of disease. The railway companies, it is complained, give the same preferential treatment to the carriage of this milk as they do to every other commodity sent by the foreign farmer. It is reasonably contended that milk of foreign origin should be so labelled, in order that the consumer may know what he is buying.

A New York journal sings the praises of paper pulp as a most useful article, which should be within reach of every householder; and it would certainly seem from this list of virtues with which it is credited that it would be well to be able to obtain it retail. Mixed with glue and plaster of Paris, or Portland cement, it is the best thing to stop cracks and breaks in wood. The pulp should be kept in a closely stoppered bottle, and should be thinned to the consistency of thin gruel with hot water just before use, when the plaster or other material is added to bring it into a pasty condition. A water-pipe broken by the frost can be readily mended by wrapping round the fracture with cheese-cloth, and dressing the joint outside the cloth with the pulp compound. When once thoroughly hardened, the strength of this cement is enormous. Sawdust boiled with paper pulp, with glue and linseed-oil added, makes a good fitting for cracks in floors, and there are many other uses for which pulp in some form or other would be found valuable in the household.

A new industry seems to be foreshadowed in the production of artificial cotton yarn from wood pulp, the finished article imitating the genuine product closely with regard to softness, lustre, and strength. The wood of the spruce or the pine is preferred for the purpose, and after being defibrated, it is bleached in the usual manner. The product is next treated with a mixture of zinc chloride, castor-oil, and gelatine, and is reduced to strands and rubbed into threads, when it assumes much the appearance of cotton yarn.

With the advent of rapid-fire guns for naval use, it became evident that something more than water-tight compartments was required to protect a ship's side against shot-holes; and the plan generally adopted is that of the copper dam, or double skin, packed with some material which, after passage of a projectile, would expand and seal the wound against intrusion of water. The material adopted in the British navy has been a mixture of cork and oakum, and in the case of H.M.S. *Inflexible*, the total amount of packing aggregates in weight no less than one hundred and forty-three tons. In the United States navy, the same duty has been fulfilled by the use of cellulose obtained from the husks of cocoa-nuts. Recently, however, a better material has been found in the pith of corn-stalks, which has been granulated by machinery. In recent trials it was shown that this material kept the water out after passage of a shot most efficiently. The pith is about one-sixth the weight, bulk for bulk, of the mixture of oakum and cork.

THE PROSPECTS OF OUR DESCENDANTS IN REGARD TO STATURE.

The question whether men of the present time are in general taller or shorter than their predecessors has been answered by different people in diametrically opposite ways. The followers of the theory of degeneration—the ancient theory, as it may be termed—maintain that in the far distant past men were of a stature greatly exceeding what is usual nowadays. In corroboration of their theory they appeal to the writings of old authors of various nationalities, and undoubtedly they receive strong support from such writings. In the Bible we read of the sons of Anak, of the Emims, and of others of gigantic proportions; Homer, Hesiod, Herodotus, and other Greeks of note tell us that the heroes of old far excelled later generations in size and strength; and Virgil was convinced that the men of his time were but pigmies compared with their ancestors. It will be sufficient to give these instances, but examples might be multiplied to any extent, for in the legends, traditions, and early writings of all, or nearly all, the races of mankind figure heroes or demi-gods of a stature far beyond that of any men at present in existence. The followers of the theory of increase—which may be called the modern theory—contend, on the other hand, that the average height of mankind has been slowly but steadily rising; and as one of the evidences of the truth of their contention they point to the armour of the middle ages, of which a great quantity is preserved in different places, and certainly appears small to modern eyes.

In this conflict of opinion it is fortunate that there now exists in regard to one country, namely France, information which removes this matter from the region of mere speculation, and enables us to arrive at conclusions which we may feel assured are accurate. This information is as follows:

(*a*) The measurements made by Dr Rahon of the bones of various ancient peoples collected from all parts of France. The following are the results arrived at by him:

I. QUATERNARY PERIOD.

5 males, average height, 1·629 mètres.

II. NEOLITHIC PERIOD.

429 males, average height, 1·625 mètres.
189 females, " " 1·506 "

III. EARLY HISTORIC PERIOD. (*Gauls, Franks, &c.*)

215 males, average height, 1·662 mètres.
39 females, " " 1·539 "

IV. PARISIANS OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

434 males, average height, 1·656 mètres.
147 females, " " 1·555 "

(*b*) The measurements made by Dr Manouvrier. This scientist, after examining the bones of 205 men and 119 women dissected in the Paris School of Medicine, found that the average height of the men was 1·650 mètres, and of the women, 1·528 mètres.

(*c*) The average heights of men and women, as ascertained by the Criminal Investigation Department. These are respectively 1·648 mètres and 1·545 mètres.

(*d*) The average height of men, as ascertained in recruiting for the army. This is 1·648 mètres.

Assuming, as we have every right to do, that this information is correct, we arrive at the conclusions set out below. These, it must be carefully remembered, are only directly applicable to France; but inasmuch as there seems to be no reason to suppose that the people of France are exceptional in this respect, we may apply them provisionally to other nations. The following are the conclusions:

(i.) The prehistoric peoples were not of vast proportions, but were, on the contrary, somewhat shorter than the men and women of the present day.

(ii.) Modern men and women are slightly, but only slightly, inferior in height to their forerunners of early historic times and the middle ages.

(iii.) During three thousand years the stature of mankind has not greatly altered, and it stands at present nearly half-way between the highest and lowest points which it has touched during that long period. The average French recruit is 5 feet 4¾ inches in height; the man of the early historic period (the tallest period) was not quite 5 feet 5½ inches.

What, then, are the prospects of our descendants? If we may judge of the future by the experience of the past, it is clearly probable that they will not differ materially from us in height. At one period they may be somewhat taller, at another somewhat shorter, but it is unlikely that any radical change in the stature of mankind will ever take place.

A SONNET.

With love's uncertain strife my heart is torn,
Yet would I not be spared one hour of pain,
Still knowing that my suffering is gain,
Nor shall the years leave me at last forlorn.
There is a joy known but to those who mourn;
Silence and tears and partings are not vain;
Love's selfishness by love's delay is slain,
And patient strength of patient love is born.
'Tis in the lonely darkness of the night
That dewdrops gather on the sleeping flower,
That knoweth not their virtue till the hour
When o'er the earth there streams the morning light;
So love in shadowed silence gathers power
For worthier service when the sky is bright.

Percy Gallard.

⁂ TO CONTRIBUTORS.

1*st*. All communications should be addressed to the 'Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.'

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THE MYSTERY OF THE GOLDEN LLAMA.

By E. J. ROCKE SURRAGE.

A TALE IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.—THE GOLDEN LLAMA.

When Mrs Placer first told me that a foreign gentleman had been to see her first-floor set and was coming in on the Tuesday night, I simply nodded my head and said that I was very glad to hear it, and hoped he would be a decent sort of man. I can truthfully declare that, so far from feeling any symptoms of that mysterious presentiment which, we are told, usually heralds a coming evil of supernatural agency, my only sensation was one of pleasure at the prospect of having a companion to share the solitude of my lodgings.

I was very solitary at that period of my life. It was more than six months since I had left my Berwickshire home, a lad fresh from the enthusiasms of college life, to follow the uncertain calling of a man of letters in London; and if I had found any one thing more difficult of attainment than the production of remunerative work, that thing was the friendship of men of my own position. It may have been due to my Northern cautiousness, or to my Northern roughness of exterior, or perhaps merely to my own feeling of strangeness and reserve; but the fact remains that at that time I could not count one friend in the whole great crowded wilderness in which I lived, and that the evenings which succeeded my laborious days were usually spent in the unrelieved solitude of my own room. True, I was on excellent terms with the buxom Mrs Placer—a model landlady, honest, hard-working, and conscientious beyond one's conceptions of her class; but Mrs Placer's conversation, consisting wholly as it did of elegiac dissertations on her late husband's virtues and of such portion of the vapid gossip of the street as had been filtered over the neighbours' door-steps or distilled through the taciturn lips of the milkman, left much to be desired as an intellectual relaxation. Moreover, the modest street itself in which I lived—a sort of poor relation of Bloomsbury, through which could be traced a quite unacknowledged connection with the purlieus of Gray's Inn Road—was not conducive to the supply of much variety to a monotonous life such as mine. So that I was unfeignedly pleased to hear that the first-floor rooms, which had been so long unlet, were at last to have a tenant, even if that tenant were, as Mrs Placer stated, a 'foreign gentleman.'

It was on one Sunday morning that Mrs Placer, pausing for an instant in her interesting description of 'No. 27's' funeral on the previous day, announced the imminence of the stranger's arrival. On Tuesday evening he came.

I did not see him for several days; but I heard of him through Mrs Placer. Her daily gossip became intermixed with scraps of information relative to her lodger. His name, I learnt, was Señor Juan Almirez. He was a Spaniard, Mrs Placer thought, or he might be a Portuguese; but he spoke English 'just like you or me.' As to the luggage he brought, the landlady had never seen such a lot of trumpery. Books of dried flowers, boxes of dried beetles, outlandish weapons that made you tremble to look at them, and grinning heathen images that brought the heart into your mouth; things dead and things alive, things in bottles and things in drawers, stuffed things and things mummified; things on the walls, and things on the mantelpiece, and things piled up in every corner of the room. 'You never see such a nasty mess in all your life, sir; you never did, indeed,' was Mrs Placer's discontented summary of the lodger's belongings. For all that, she admitted, he was a nice-spoken gentleman and very quiet; and, if it wasn't for the nasty lot of rubbish he brought with him, she wouldn't have a word to speak against him. He went to the Museum every day and stopped until it closed. No one ever visited him; he seemed very lonely; and he smoked incessantly. Such was Mrs Placer's description of my fellow-lodger.

One night, a week or two after his arrival, he presented himself in my room. My natural reserve had withheld me somehow from appearing to seek his acquaintance, but I was none the less anxious to make it. On the night in question I had heard a knock at the door, and expected the entrance of my landlady. Not hearing the sound of her shuffling footfall and somewhat laboured breathing, I looked up and saw Almirez standing in the doorway. I can picture him to myself now as he stood there against the dark background of the passage, with the light from my lamp shining on his face. A man under middle height, spare, lithe, and muscular, dusky of face and long of arm, with a mass of very slightly grizzled hair brushed back off his broad, protruding forehead. He might from his appearance have been almost any age from twenty-five to fifty; but he was, in fact, I believe, at this time about thirty-eight. He was smiling as he stood in the doorway, with a smile that I never saw absent from his face throughout the five months that I knew him—never but once, and that was the last time that ever I saw the face of Juan Almirez—a smile that lifted the tips of his neatly-trimmed black moustache, and slightly bared the white teeth behind it. A smile that had in it everything that was soft and courteous and gracefully deferential. A smile that was somehow unaccountably at variance with the stern, unyielding scrutiny of his gray eyes. Evidently a man of great mental power, evidently a gentleman in the world's sense of the word, evidently one who had passed long years of his life under a tropical sun. Such was Juan Almirez as I then saw him. He advanced into the room as I rose from my chair, and spoke in a singularly soft voice, that had in it ever so little of a foreign accent.

'The good Mrs Placer has suggested to me that you would not consider it an intrusion if I ask you to allow me to smoke my evening cigar in your company,' he said. 'My name is Almirez. I am lonely here in London, and know no one. It would be a great treat to me—if I do not incommode you—to enjoy a half-hour of your pleasant society.' Nothing could possibly have been said more gracefully; and it was with the utmost cordiality that I invited him to come in and draw his chair towards the fire.

I will say here frankly, once and for all, that I took a great fancy to Juan Almirez. Whatever occurred afterwards to make me doubt my first opinion of him, whatever I may know (or guess) now as to his diabolical designs upon myself, I must yet confess that there was a charm in the man's manner and conversation, a fascination in his quickness of thought, his brightness of intellect, his fantastic humour, his great knowledge of men and countries, above all, in the happiness of his expressions and the variety of his constantly changing moods, such as I have rarely seen in any other man. Throughout the hour that we spent together that evening I felt the charm of his company growing stronger and stronger upon me, until at last I was listening almost spell-bound to the recital of his anecdotes; and it was with very sincere pleasure that I accepted his invitation to return his visit on the following evening.

In that brief hour Almirez seemed to have imparted to me the history of his whole life. The only son of a somewhat wealthy landowner in Ecuador, he had been educated in Europe and brought up to the profession of medicine. But the regularity and responsibilities of a profession were irksome to him; and when his father died and left him an orphan, so comfortably provided for as to be free to follow the promptings of his own inclination, he had elected to renounce his professional career and pursue the life of adventure and research for which he believed Nature had designed him. He was at that time barely twenty-four years old; and during the fourteen years that had elapsed since then, he had travelled in many countries, studied nature from many aspects, written several scientific treatises, and accumulated that collection of curiosities which had struck Mrs Placer with so much horror. In the pursuit of his objects nothing had turned or daunted him. For weeks he had camped on the rigorous slopes of an unexplored peak of snow, till the day should break that gave him opportunity for its ascent; for months he had sought a specimen of some all-but unknown plant, nor relinquished his quest until it was rewarded. It was in the spirit of triumph, and not in that of boasting, that he assured me he had never failed. The greater part of his fourteen years of travel had been spent in the continent of his birth—in the sunless forests of the Amazon, on the wind-swept cordilleras of the Andes, in the desolation of the Patagonian pampas. Finally he had come to London, to study, to develop fresh plans, and classify his collections. When he had had enough of civilisation, he would resume his life of vagabondage. This, in brief, was the history of Juan Almirez, as he told it to me that night in snatches of anecdote and narrative and grave retrospect.

I was punctual in my appointment to visit his rooms on the following evening.

It was a good-sized room, the first-floor parlour; and Mrs Placer had not exaggerated the untidiness of its contents. Each of the chairs was cumbered with its individual pile of books and papers and wooden collecting-boxes; the mantelpiece had been stripped of all Mrs Placer's treasured prettinesses, and their place usurped by two goodly rows of bottles and jars of spirit, in each of which reposed some gruesome specimen of insect or reptile, or vegetable growth; a heap of oilskin-covered instruments occupied one corner of the room; the opposite side, beneath the windows, was still blocked up with packing-cases, some as yet unopened, some half-emptied of their contents; the air itself tasted dry and heavy and pungent, like the atmosphere of a museum. Almirez was seated at a writing-table, drawn under the chandelier in the middle of the room. As my eyes travelled towards his face, they fell upon something that stood on the table in front of him, something that glittered in the gaslight with the glitter of polished gold. I was too short-sighted to be able to see clearly what it was; but somehow—whether (as I have thought at times) by some sort of instinctive premonition, or whether merely because it was the first distinct object that had caught my eye amid all the confused crowd of articles with which the room was littered—I felt as if I could not take my eyes off it. Even when Almirez had cleared the easiest chair of its haphazard burden, and had drawn his own seat towards the fire, I was still peering curiously at the glittering thing upon the writing-table. He had noticed my attention; and it seemed to amuse him, for his smile became something more natural and more involuntary than was usually the case—a quiet, inscrutable smile, reflecting some humorous thought that would seem to have crossed his brain. Then he took up the glittering thing and placed it in my hands.

It was a rudely moulded image of some shaggy animal—a camel, as it seemed to me—standing about three inches high, and moulded, to all appearance, out of solid gold. On the left flank, the figure of a noon-day sun, circling a human face, and girt with many radiating beams of light, was deeply carven into the metal. The whole was very brightly polished; but the roughness of the workmanship and the redness of the gold made it appear to be of great age.

'I deem that to be the greatest of my curiosities,' Almirez was saying in his soft voice. 'Not on account of its actual value, you understand, but because of its associations and of the great difficulty which I experienced in obtaining it—and find in keeping it. There is a story—but we need not trouble about that.' There was still the same inscrutable smile on his face, as if the humorous thought had not yet quite passed away. 'It is of gold, as you will guess,' he continued; 'and it represents a llama—an animal which we are well acquainted with in the land of my birth. It is of ancient Peruvian workmanship. Very quaint, is it not? Very quaint indeed. It is useful to me as a letter-weight; but I value it beyond that.—But you must see some other of my curiosities.'

And in a few minutes my friend was deeply immersed in the exhibition and explanation of the alcoholised treasures on the mantelpiece; while I, for my part, listening to his conversation, had almost forgotten the existence of the golden llama.

HORSELESS CARRIAGES.

The present century, now drawing to a close, has been one of beneficial innovations and changes, and probably the greatest revolutioniser of all—the one which has had most influence on every department of our national life—exists in the marvellous systems of locomotion and conveyance, with which we are now so familiar.

It is not perhaps too much to say that our successors in the not distant future will wonder at our want of enterprise or forethought in allowing so many years to pass away before we discovered that our railways, even at first so successful, ought to have been supplemented long ago by what are termed 'light railways,' to serve as feeders to the great main lines, and that locomotives to run on the common or public roads would have added greatly to our convenience and prosperity. Very recently, however, the principal hindrance to the use and extension of the latter has been recognised as an intolerable obstacle. There has long been a real and serious demand for the abolition of the penalties which now attach to the running of locomotives on public roads, and one of the last acts of the late Government was to introduce to the House of Commons a Bill of a single clause, it is stated; its purpose being to exempt vehicles propelled by mechanical means from the operation of the Locomotives or Highways Act. At the present time, not even a bicycle driven by steam, or any other similar motor, would be allowed to run on our public roads without two men with red flags, each sixty yards distant, and restricted to a speed of four miles an hour in the country, and two miles in the towns. It is quite conceivable that but for this legislative hindrance, this country, as the pioneer of railways, steam-navigation, and cycles, would have now occupied a more prominent position as regards this movement, which bids fair to become soon a new industry, as well as a new force in civilisation.

It has been the good fortune of our neighbours across 'the silver streak,' that they have had no such preposterous obstacles to hold them back, and so they have been enabled to lead the way in introducing one of the most useful and valuable innovations of modern times. New and great inventions often require time to develop and find their way into general adoption; but in the great trials of road locomotives, recently held in France, the value of the results obtained were so patent and satisfactory as to convince every one that the petroleum motor has a wonderful future before it, and promises to make locomotion on roads both easier, safer, and quicker. For a considerable number of years, French engineers have been actively engaged experimenting on road locomotives, which have apparently reached such a degree of efficiency, that in July 1894 it was resolved to have a competitive trial of locomotives on the public roads. The run was from Paris to Rouen and back, a distance of eighty miles; and so much interest and enthusiasm were aroused, that it was resolved to carry out this year a similar trial, but on a much more extensive scale.

The route selected was peculiarly difficult and trying. The conditions, as will be seen, were very severe, so much so that many leading experts predicted failure for the whole scheme; and in order to induce competitors to come forward, a sum of three thousand pounds was collected for distribution among a few of the most successful. On the 4th of June last, many thousands of interested spectators had gathered together at the Arc de Triomphe to see the machines start. The route lay through Versailles, Etampes, Orleans, Blois, Tours, Poitiers, and Angoulême to Bordeaux, and back to Paris, a running distance of seven hundred and forty-four miles, certainly a much more serious trial than that of 1894. The route lay through a hilly and difficult country for this kind of travelling. During the first portion of the journey there was an abrupt rise, roughly of over five hundred feet, the highest point at Limours being one hundred and sixty-eight mètres above the sea-level; and altogether the route in its course presented every variety of obstacle and difficulty.

The conditions imposed were also of such a character as gave an opportunity of really testing the machines to their utmost capabilities of sustained endurance in the exertion of power. There were to be two or more conductors for each vehicle, and in the event of accident or break-down, no outside assistance was to be allowed. The conductors were to carry with them all necessary materials and tools for repairs, and if the repairs or renewal of any part proved to be beyond the power of the conductors to execute, the machine was held to have retired from the trial as a competitor, and to have failed.

There were twenty-seven locomotives entered for trial—namely, sixteen driven by petroleum, seven by steam, two by electricity, and two bicycles propelled by petroleum. Of the total number, about one-half of the competing carriages ran the complete round, arriving at Paris in good condition. The start was made on the 11th of June last, a petroleum-driven carriage leading the way, the others following, one every three minutes. On the whole, and taking the twenty-seven cars that started, the mishaps were extremely few. Some of these were from what might be called preventable accidents, and none from absolute failure. One of the steam-carriages 'ran over a large dog,' and broke a hind wheel. One broke a piston, while the wheels of another failed shortly after it started. Such are a few of the accidents, and these give a fair representation of the mishaps which occurred throughout the trial. The first prize of fourteen hundred pounds was won by MM. Panhard and Levassor's petroleum locomotive, carrying four passengers. It completed the round journey in fifty-nine and three-quarter hours, giving an average speed of twelve and a half miles an hour. Last year the first prize was divided between the same firm and M. Pengeot.

In summing up the leading features of this most important and valuable experiment, we are met by some very unexpected results. It is somewhat strange to find that electricity, which has been looked on as the motor of the future, makes no show worth mentioning, while steam is quite in the shade; and so far as efficiency, convenience, and cheapness are concerned, the petroleum motor ('Système Daimler') is far ahead of all the others. The only objection raised against petroleum is that it smells disagreeably. In comparison, the objections to steam are manifold—namely, carrying of fuel and water, the noise of steam escaping from the safety-valve, and which cannot be avoided when standing; when in motion, the exhaust steam and occasional discharges of mixed vapour and hot water are annoying, while the cleaning of the fire is disagreeable from the dust and ashes, which are unavoidable.

The petroleum motor is not a complicated combination of mechanical intricacies. It has the merit, at least, of simplicity; it is clean, easy to examine and manage; and a lighted match sets it off on its noiseless career. It has been aptly named a 'horseless carriage,' and being reduced in size, is handy and portable. It will do all that horses can do, and something more; as, for instance, running backwards; but—which is probably an advantage—it cannot move sideways, as horses will at times do. Its speed is, if necessary, beyond that of a horse: twelve and a half miles an hour, and even more if wanted, is good work continued for three hours without stoppage for examination. The carriage has a supply of petroleum for four hours' running, which can be increased to serve for twelve hours' work. Every thirty miles run, a small supply of cold water is required to be used for keeping the working parts cool. Since 1890 these petroleum carriages have been constantly experimented on, and so have made great progress in France. In appearance they are similar to the dogcart or wagonette; but being without horses, are only about half the length. They have two brakes, one for general use, worked by pressure from the foot, for rapid control; the other a powerful combination, with certain and instantaneous action.

There are said to be over two hundred automatic vehicles at work in the streets of Paris alone at the present time. It is also reported that since the trial of road locomotives, the Abeille Hackney Cab Company have ordered two hundred of these carriages for service next year. On the whole, it is generally believed that the petroleum motor is not at all in danger of being superseded by any other motor likely to appear in the future. It is not a costly machine to begin with, considering its general fitness for the purpose intended. It can be kept at work with an expenditure of from one and a half to two francs per day, and about one-third of the cost by any other system, either by horses or automatic machines. The price of a petroleum locomotive ranges from one hundred and sixty-eight pounds to two hundred and forty pounds sterling according to the purpose for which it is intended.

The first journey made in this country in a petroleum motor carriage was that of Mr Evelyn Ellis, and Mr Simms of the Daimler Motor Syndicate, 49 Leadenhall Street, London, on July 5th. A distance of 56 miles was run between Micheldever, near Winchester, and Datchet, in 5 hours 32 minutes, exclusive of stoppages. The average speed was 9·84 miles an hour, the usual travelling speed being from 8 to 12 miles an hour. Out of 133 horses passed on the way, only two little ponies seem to have been frightened. This car is similar to the one which gained the first prize in the French carriage race, and is a neat, compact four-wheeled dogcart, with accommodation for four persons and two portmanteaus. The consumption of petroleum was little over one halfpenny per mile, and there was no smoke, heat, or smell. The steering is simple, and the car could be brought to a standstill within little more than a yard.

So much has been accomplished in this direction within the last few years, that it is believed by many the time is not far distant when horses, except for riding, will be superseded by mechanical power for farm-work and many other purposes, such as moving and carriage of heavy loads, locomotion, &c. Very recently we have heard of 'light railways,' as supplementary to the great main lines, with considerable anxiety as to their cost. There is a reasonable possibility that the petroleum motor may yet solve this question on public highways, if these are thoroughly prepared for the purpose. It is also possible that, after a few years' experience, the world may be brought to wonder how it existed so long without what may prove in the course of time to be an indispensable necessity.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

By G. Manville Fenn.

CHAPTER XX.—HUMBLE PIE.

'There is no hope, and I was mad,' said Wynyan, after a sleepless night. 'Saw through *couleur de rose* spectacles? No,' he cried bitterly; 'I looked at my future through some great magnifying lens, and now I can see the reality with the naked eye. But I am awake now. It has been all a dream, and it is time to be stirring. Well, why not? It is often so: Fate's compensation. She gives us the bitter in one cup, the sweet in the other. Why should not I be up and doing instead of wasting my life here like a drivelling, love-sick idiot? The new land invites me. What did he say—a motive-power for their little navy? How strange! He could not know. And yet he offers it to me. It is Fate again. I am under no tie. I am bound in no way to our Government, and Deconcagua can never be our enemy. A pitiful little South American state. It would only be the frog trying to imitate the ox. I could feel innocent of being a renegade. Pshaw! that is being too thin skinned. What of our great firms who have built ships, made engines, rifles, bayonets, powder for other nations? There is no reason why, when the tide is at its height for the second time for me—no reason why I should not take the chance which leads to fortune. A boyish idea—a mistake—bitter, but I must forget it. Some day I can laugh at my folly.

'Yes, I should be again mad to cast away such a chance. What did he say—my own terms? Well, I must be the man of the world now, and make my own terms fast this time in black and white, and endorsed by stamps—to be valueless if I felt that I was wronged. Poor old Dalton! he meant well by me; but all our thoughts were on our motor, and we put off the business part. But never mind that. Shall I be doing right in making a bargain with our smooth, flattering Mephisto? Yes: I have no ties whatever, and it is time to study self. A bright tropical country, a high position, wealth, and perhaps—a beautiful wife! Does he mean to give me that dark-eyed, soulless toy? No: only a bait. Well, that is one side of the question. Let's see the reverse: Years of struggling, disappointment, and possibly failure, while I hear of Brant's good fortune, and sit in my den, biting my nails with envy, heart-sick at his successes; for it would come to that—it would come to that.—Not one look last night, after what was at best but a friendly chat!'

'Yes: these are both sides of the question,' cried Wynyan excitedly. 'Now, what shall I do? Spin up a coin,' he added, with a reckless laugh, 'and let that decide? No: I'll be the calm business man now,' he said quietly. 'There is no need of hesitation: I am free now; and it shall be—yes: I'll go.'

A sharp *rat-tat* upon the iron-clamped oak door.

'Post,' he muttered; but no letter fell into the box. 'Knock again.'

He glanced at his watch. Mid-day; and as he replaced it, there was another knock.

'Just as I was going out,' he muttered pettishly; and he strode to the door, meaning to be brief with his visitor, and then take a cab at once to Victoria Street. But little matters change great causes; and, as he threw open the doors, he started in surprise.

'Hamber!' he cried. 'My dear old fellow, I am glad to see you. Come in.'

'Thank you, Mr Wynyan, thank you, my dear sir,' cried the old man, smiling his satisfaction at the warm greeting. 'This is very good of you—very, very friendly.'

'Why, of course.—Sit down, old fellow. I'm so glad to see you. Just in time, though. Five minutes later, and should have been off on important business.'

'Then, sir, I'm very glad I've caught you. I've come too—on important business.'

'Not so important as mine, Hamber. I've had a splendid offer made to me which I shall accept.'

'Indeed, sir!'

'Yes: to go abroad and take a leading position as engineer for a foreign Government.'

'For—a—for—a—foreign Government, sir?' faltered Hamber.

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'Yes: congratulate me.'

'No, no, no, sir: impossible. No, no, Mr Wynyan; you must not think of such a thing. You are too great a man. We want you here.'

'Great a man!' cried Wynyan mockingly, as he stood resting one foot upon the chair opposite to where the old clerk was seated, wiping his dewy forehead—'great a man! Great enough to be kicked out of his position at the caprice of an insolent jackanapes.'

'Yes, sir! That was so; and jackanapes is the very word to use; but then, you see, he was master—at least he thought he was.'

'What do you mean?' said Wynyan sharply.

'I mean, sir, of course he is master, and yet he isn't. Position gives him the mastership; but he is as ignorant as a child of our great business.'

'Yes, of course. Well, that is all nothing to me.'

'I—I—but—but—excuse me, Mr Wynyan, sir, it is a great deal to you.'

'No, Hamber, nothing at all. I was soft metal: now I am hardened steel.—Well, how are you getting on?'

'Badly, sir. Worried to death.'

'By Brant?'

'No, sir; by the way things are going.—Mr Wynyan, sir,' cried the old man, rising excitedly, and catching hold of Wynyan's arm, 'you mustn't talk of going abroad, sir: we want you at Great George Street.'

'So badly that you drove me away.'

'A madman did, sir; but he has repented. Mr Wynyan, sir—he'——

'What?' cried Wynyan, excited now in his turn. 'Brant Dalton repented?'

'Yes, sir; he is quite broken down. He can't get on, and it is like ruin without you. Pray—pray, sir, don't be hard with us, for the sake of my dear old employer and Miss Rénée. Forget all the past, sir, and come back and take the helm before the grand old ship goes on the rocks.'

'Then Brant Dalton has sent you?' cried Wynyan, excitedly seizing his visitor by the shoulders.

'Don't—please don't be angry with me, sir. I love the old business, and it would break my heart if it went wrong.'

'Tell me this instant: Brant Dalton sent you?'

'Yes, sir; but please, sir, I am only doing my duty.'

'Yes, I know,' cried Wynyan, thrusting the old man back in his chair. 'Go and tell Brant Dalton'——

'Mr Wynyan, sir, you are angry. Pray, pray don't send me with any rash message which you might repent having said.'

'Repent!' said Wynyan scornfully. 'I repent!—But stop: this is impossible. I met Brant Dalton last night, and he was more insufferably insolent than ever. You say he sent you. When did you see him?'

'Not an hour ago, sir. Mr Wynyan, sir, it's a great triumph for you. You have humbled him to the dust, and he begs of you to come back on your own terms, sir. Think what that means: what a chance it is for you to be what you always were—a gentleman. Be magnanimous, sir, for Miss Rénée's sake.'

'Silence, man!' cried Wynyan sternly.

'Don't, don't be angry with me, sir.'

'I am not, Hamber. Go on. You are, of course, only doing your duty to your employer.'

Wynyan had ceased striding excitedly up and down the room, and stopped opposite to the old man.

'Quick!' he said; 'tell me how matters stand with Dalton and Company. You have that contract from Government to work out the motor?'

'Yes, sir, our—your great patent?'

'Your great patent,' said Wynyan bitterly.

'Yes, sir; and there has been a great deal of correspondence with Whitehall. They are pressing us to get on with it, and to show them some results, as they have paid down heavily.'

'Well, get on with it, and show them some results.'

'But we cannot, sir. It is impossible,' cried the old man dismally. 'We shall be ruined. Money has been spent in materials and wages to a great extent, Mr Brant being so rash; extra steam-power laid on.'

'There was plenty,' said Wynyan decisively.

'There you are, sir,' cried Hamber; 'you know: we don't. All this has been done, but we get no further. We can draw up estimates, and make drawings, and the works are over yonder; but poor Mr Dalton is dead, you have left us, and there is no master mind, no master key to set all going.'

'Mr Brant,' said Wynyan sarcastically.

'Bah!' cried old Hamber fiercely. 'He knows the odds for the Derby and Oaks; but what does he know about our business? I've been there all these years, sir, and I couldn't do it. Without a leading man at the helm, we are all hopelessly on the rocks.'

'But you threw the pilot overboard to drown, Hamber.'

'Oh yes, sir, I know—I know,' groaned the old man; 'and I'm not fighting for Mr Brant: it's our grand old business—Miss Rénée—my dear old master's grand invention—his and yours, sir. Only a few days before he went down to Brighton, he laid his hand on my shoulder. "Hamber," he said, "Mr Wynyan's a genius. We've worked out the grandest idea that ever came to an engineer;" and now this great work is going to wreck unless you will come and help us.'

Wynyan stood gazing straight before him.

'Government will stand no nonsense, sir. They paid up, and they'll have it all back or their pound of flesh.—Mr Wynyan, do you hear me, sir?'

There was no reply for a few moments, while Wynyan gazed in the troubled features before him, and then he spoke in a cool, cynical tone.

'My good old friend, let's look the matter in the face. Suppose I come back, what is it for?'

'Why, sir, to'——

'Stop! Hear me out. I know, and I'll tell you: it is to drag Brant Dalton from among the rocks, and thrust him out into the tideway—to float into the harbour of success.'

'Yes, sir, it does mean that, of course.'

'And as soon as I have done this, he will pitch me over again.'

'No, no, sir: you must have a thorough agreement with him and insist upon your rights—I'd have a partnership and half share. You would deserve more.'

'Exactly, Hamber,' said Wynyan: 'come back at this man's call for the sake of pounds, shillings, and pence. I do not despise money, but I'm not going to buy it at such a cost. If I came back, it would be as an enemy, not as a friend.'

'Oh, Mr Wynyan, sir, I know how you were insulted, but it isn't Christian-like to talk in that way. You don't want to take revenge upon a man like that.'

'But I do, Hamber; I want to humble him. Time back I only despised the cur's snarlings; but he has bitten me with his vile, poisonous fangs; and if I returned, it would be to see him writhe in his impotence and bitterness at being dependent upon the man he hates.'

'Yes, sir, it would indeed be heaping coals of fire upon your enemy's head; and I'm afraid I should enjoy seeing him wince.'

'So should I, Hamber,' cried Wynyan; 'but no: I can't stoop to come back, even in triumph, and he has raised up such a devil in me by all he has done that I dare not trust myself to come. I should glory in his abasement. Things are best as they are.'

'But the grand old business, sir—the disgrace of failure—the tremendous loss—the old name of Dalton, so honoured all these years—that has been such a power.'

'It is sad, Hamber, but it does not move me. Brant only turns to me as a last resource.'

'Yes, sir, of course; but think of our contract.'

'Well, I had the plans and drawings in my hands, but I gave them up to him honourably.'

'But they are worthless without your guiding brain, sir.'

Wynyan could not help feeling a thrill of satisfaction, but he spoke calmly enough.

'There are plenty of clever men bringing their brains to market: let him buy them.'

'Mr Wynyan!' cried the old clerk piteously; 'don't talk like that. You know that there is not a man living who can bring the invention to perfection.'

'What? I tell you honestly, Hamber, that I believe everything was noted down in the drawings and calculations.'

'Yes, sir, no doubt; but there are parts where it is like an unknown tongue to every one but you. With you to carry it through, it will be a grand success. Without you, a dismal failure.'

'Then,' said Wynyan sternly, 'it cannot harm my poor old friend. He is beyond all our petty ambitions and weak inventions. It must fail: Dalton and Company is only a name to me now.'

The old clerk groaned.

'I have another name to make: not Brant Dalton's—my own. I tell you I am going abroad.'

'But we cannot work for ourselves alone in this world, Mr Wynyan,' pleaded Hamber. 'I am a very old man, sir, now—on the brink of the grave, and nearly ready to pass beyond the dark veil which hides the future. I know all this—how helpless we are, and how, when we would be selfish, we keep on waking to the fact that we cannot fight only for self. Mr Wynyan, my dear boy, you of whom I have always been so proud, and wished that I had married that I might have had such a son—be merciful.'

Wynyan's stern, hard face softened as he saw the tears slowly trickling down the furrows of the old man's face, and he placed his hand in those outstretched pleadingly toward him.

'Do come back, sir. Life is so short. I can say it to you, for I know. My seventy years—what are they? Little more to look back on than a few days. Don't be hard upon us, sir, and raise up a cloud that will cling to you to the very last.'

'I cannot come back, Hamber. I have shown no enmity; I have left Brant Dalton in peaceful possession of that to which I had the major claim.'

'Yes, sir, and if you wanted revenge, you have had it. He has robbed you, and his prize is worthless.'

'Then let him suffer. I was content to lose all.'

'But there are others, sir, as I tried to show you. I did not like to speak, but you force me to. Think of Miss Rénée.'

Wynyan snatched away his hand as if he had received a stab, and the scene on the previous night came back—Rénée passing out resting upon Brant's arm, without once turning to give him a look; and now his face was hard and stern once more.

'Mr Wynyan—you will come,' whispered the old man.

'To fight for Brant Dalton when he is helpless, for the sake of the woman who will be his wife. You ask too much, Hamber. I am only human. No.'

Hamber took out his handkerchief and wiped his eyes, dabbed the drops from his dewy brow, and then in a hopeless way he stood looking at Wynyan, as he wiped his cold damp hands.

'But this can't be you speaking, Mr Wynyan. You can't hold to that, sir,' cried the old man passionately, as a fresh access of power seemed to come to him. 'Oh sir, this is not you.'

'No,' cried Wynyan fiercely, 'it is not my natural self, but the man that Brant Dalton's cowardly persecution has made out of my worser part. From the first day I entered Dalton's office he took a dislike to me, because my tastes were not his and I would not join him in his habits. Then he found a fresh and greater cause for his dislike, and never let slip an opportunity for maligning me to his uncle.'

'Who trusted you as his second self, sir.'

'And increased Brant's hatred. Yes: Robert Dalton fully trusted me, and there was nothing I would not have done to serve him in return.'

'Except come forward now to save his

business from ruin, and his child from suffering, as she must.'

Wynyan gazed wildly at the speaker, who went on.

'That is so, sir,' said the old man sternly. 'I should like to see you stand over Brant Dalton, and lash the scoundrel till he begged for mercy; but you can't do it, sir: it is not your work, and you must come back.'

'Not even if Brant came and humbled himself to me, and begged me.'

'Pshaw!' ejaculated the old man. 'What if he did? He would, if I took that back as your ultimatum; but you don't want that, Mr Wynyan--you couldn't stoop to see him grovel before you, snivelling out his contemptible apology; for what would it mean? Mr Wynyan, I'm going back to Great George Street directly, to tell Brant Dalton that you are coming to the office to take the lead at once—as if nothing had happened.'

'Hamber, I am going to conclude my negotiations, and possibly in a few days I shall be off abroad.'

'No, sir, you are not. You come back to us.'

'What?'

Old Hamber clapped his hands upon Wynyan's shoulders, and stood gazing at him for a few moments in silence.

'That's right: look me straight in the eyes, my boy, and tell me that, knowing all you do, you will deliberately throw us over, and leave us to go to wreck. Now then, Paul Wynyan, tell me that.'

There was silence for a full minute; and then the old man uttered an exultant cry.

'He can't! He can't,' he said, as he let one hand slip down to Wynyan's breast. 'It's pure gold—the heart of a true man—and—and—God bless you, my dear boy! I thank Him--that I have lived to see this day.'

'Hamber! What is it?' cried Wynyan, catching the old man tightly to prevent his falling, for he had ended by grasping the young man's hand in his to raise it to his lips, and then changed colour, reeled, and his head fell sidewise upon his shoulder.

'Nothing, sir, nothing,' he said, after a minute or two. 'A little weak: that's all. Not so young as I was. Let me sit here for a few moments.—A glass of water.—Thank you. I'm coming round. I have had a deal of worry; and all this upset me a little. But there—there, I'm quite right now: only a touch of my complaint.'

'Your complaint? I did not know you suffered.'

'No, sir? Thought I showed it pretty plainly now. Anno Domini, Mr Wynyan. That's all. --Now, good-bye, sir. I must get back. The walk will do me good. Do you know, sir, I hardly like getting outside the 'buses now. A bit nervous—from my complaint—— What, sir? You will?'

The old man's eyes filled with the weak tears.

'Yes, you are not well enough to go alone. I'll come back with you to the office now.'

Old Hamber's hand closed upon Wynyan's strong arm, and he hardly quitted his grasp till they were back in the great marble-paved hall.

'In triumph, Mr Wynyan,' the old man whispered; 'but you are too great a ruler to trample on your foes.'

Brant was out.

A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY SCOT IN THE FAR EAST.

There is in these days no career open to the adventurous comparable in excitement, danger, interest, and possible profit, to that of the merchant adventurer of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From the day he dropped his pilot in the Channel, to the time—often years distant—when he again entered an English port, he was an Ishmaelite, whose own hand must keep his head, for every man's hand was against him. There was no chain of British possessions round the world, and at the embryo 'factories' of the East India Company the 'interloper' was apt to meet with an exceedingly cool reception, if not worse. Dutch, French, Spanish, and Portuguese were of course no fonder of him, and the former in particular were not over-scrupulous as to war or peace time when an opportunity presented itself for securing a valuable cargo at the expense of the 'verdomd Englander.' Besides, for many months he would be as completely cut off from European news as if he were in another planet, so that the adventurer's first intimation of a 'complication' would come from a foreign privateer or man-of-war; and he would speedily find himself, minus ship, goods, and cash, in highly insanitary quarters at Batavia or Pondicherry. Piracy, too, in those days might almost be called a branch of recognised industry, so extensive were its operations, and so feeble the efforts to check it. The adventurer traded with his barbarous or semi-barbarous customers, literally, goods in one hand, and pistol in the other. Sometimes a petty tyrant would demand the help of the European's arms against enemies or rebels, as the price of allowing him to trade; and very likely the same arms had to be brought into requisition before the potentate could be induced to 'pay up.' Add to these the perils of storm and typhoon, to be encountered, perhaps, with three-quarters of the crew disabled with scurvy, of fever-stricken coasts, and uncharted seas, and the most exacting amateur of peril could find little more to desire.

However, Captain Alexander Hamilton, who published his *Account of the East Indies*, in two bulky volumes, at Edinburgh in 1727, does not seem to think that there was anything out of the way in leading this kind of life for five-and-thirty years; after which, as he says, 'having brought back a charm to keep the meagre devil [poverty] from entering his house,' he employed himself in the composition of his book. Though he commences with a formidable preface, he does not tell us much about himself, except that he went very young to travel, 'not for want, for there is enough of that in my own country; but having a rambling mind and a fortune too narrow to travel like a gentleman, I applied myself to study in Neptune's university, and in time became a master of arts.' A Dugald Dalgetty, in fact, with a nautical and trading turn instead of a military one; but always ready for a fight, ashore or afloat, if it came in the way of business; shrewd, masterful, and daring; ever ready to do a good turn, or requite an ill one; of considerable education, and a strong sense of humour, though of somewhat too broad and seamanlike a sort for these more squeamish days. His humour, indeed, is alone sufficient to distinguish the Captain's book from the dreary itineraries produced by travellers of his day and long afterwards; but he also gives a curious and valuable account of the state of the East, and the relations to each other of the European powers who had established themselves there.

In Hamilton's time (1688–1723) the principal states of Asia were in transition; the old powers and dynasties were breaking up, and it was nowhere apparent what was to succeed them. Persia had fallen into anarchy, and, after the incapable Shah Hussein, last of the Sûfi dynasty (the 'Sophies of Persia'), some thirty years of murder and usurpation elapsed, till Nadir Shah for a few years made the name of Persia a terror to India and Central Asia. In India, the Mogul Empire was shaking, and even before the death of Aurungzebe, it began to break up, province by province. In China, the present Manchu dynasty was far from having established its rule, and the southern and western provinces were devastated by vast hordes of so-called 'rebels,' who were in fact simply those brigands and robbers who spring up as from dragons' teeth when an Oriental Government is overthrown, and, as we have found in Burma, give more trouble to the successors than the regular forces. The Indo-Chinese kingdoms were in a chronic state of war of the Chinese kind, in which no quarter is given to non-combatants; and Japan only kept the even tenor of her way. Among Europeans, the Dutch held the foremost place. Their powerful navy, and the possession of a strong *point d'appui* at Batavia, gave them a vast advantage over the English and French, whose scattered factories depended largely on Europe for supplies and assistance.

Our Scotch Ulysses has a very hearty dislike for 'our dear allies,' and indeed the hideous story of the murder of the English traders at Amboyna in 1622 would excuse it. A score of writers, from Tavernier to the unpleasantly realistic 'Perelaer,' assure us that the fault of the Dutch in India lies not only in giving too little and asking too much, but in treachery, cruelty, rapacity, and corruption. But meanwhile, they seemed on a fair way to become the foremost European power in the East. They had taken Malacca, Colombo, Galle, and Trincomalee from the Portuguese, of whose brilliant but short-lived colonial empire little remained but Goa, where, says Hamilton, 'thirty thousand church vermin live idly on the labour and sweat of the miserable laity.' The Muscat Arabs had deprived the Portuguese of much of their possessions on the African and Arabian coasts. Their famous port of Ormuz fell in the beginning of the seventeenth century to a combined attack from Shah Abbas and an English force. 'Tradition reports that there was so much ready-money found in the castle that it was measured by long-boats full, and one boat being pretty full, and an officer still throwing in more, the boatswain of the ship swore that he would throw it in the sea if they put in more, for he could not tell what would satisfy them if not a boat full of money.'

The latter half of the seventeenth century was the golden age of piracy. In 1695 one Captain Avery or Every took a ship of the Moguls on her way to Jeddah, with the incredible booty of two and a half million rupees. It seems to have been accounted exceptional humanity in him to 'let the ship go without torturing any of the people.' In the same year, a 'syndicate' of pirates hoisted the 'Jolly Roger' on Perim, and began fortifications; but, from want of water, they removed to Île St Marie, the present French settlement of Port Louis. These were the famous 'Madagascar pirates,' so long the terror of the Indian seas. A deserved retribution overtook them in 1704. 'One Millar, with a cargo of strong ale and brandy, that he carried to sell them, killed above five hundred of them by carousing, though they took his ship and cargo as a present from him, and his crew joined the pirates.' What an incident for the late Mr Stevenson!

In such times the European adventurer found boundless scope. A man of Hamilton's stamp might have risen as did Constantine Phaulcon, the Levantine sailor, who became Prime Minister to the king of Siam (1683–88). Or he might have carved out a kingdom for himself, like George Thomas, the runaway man-o'-war's man, who was first a Mahratta general, and then an independent Rajah of the Punjab (1780–1801). But Hamilton would have none of such risky eminence; and when in 1703 the Rajah of Johore made him a present of the island of Singapore, he declined it with thanks 'as of no use to a private person, though a proper place for a company to settle a factory on.' The early history of the East India Company contains very little for an Englishman to be proud of. The instructions of the Governors and factors were, to get and send to Leadenhall Street as much money as possible, no matter how, and to preserve their monopoly by any means. The latter they had some reason to be jealous of, for the amount required for bribes and *dasturi* to the Court at home was prodigious, and they were always liable to be outbidden. Hamilton records that the Dutch paid one hundred thousand pounds to Charles II. to forbid the Company to retake Bantam, after they had fitted out a fleet at enormous expense.

The Governor of the East India Company at this time was that Sir Josiah Child who sent to his subordinates at Bombay the famous despatch, 'I expect that my will and orders shall be your rule, and not the laws of England, which are a heap of nonsense compiled by a few ignorant country gentlemen.' These instructions were certainly not needed by his namesake, 'General' John Child, Governor of Bombay, an official worthy of the Russian Tchin. The stories of this man's doings, which Hamilton gives at great length, rival anything that has been written of Russia, and give one a very poor opinion of the European community which endured them.

At Madras, or Fort St George, the settlement was organised like an English borough, with mayor, aldermen, clerks, and solicitors complete; 'but I found it a mere farce, for a few pagodas [gold coins] could turn the scale of justice to which side the Governor pleased.' The Governor was only empowered to execute for piracy; but this was a word of curiously elastic meaning. Governor Yale had an English groom who left his service without notice, which act was, by the potentate's direction, brought in flat piracy as ever was committed; and the groom was hanged accordingly. Perhaps no great cities have ever risen under such natural disadvantages as Madras and Calcutta. The founders of the former pitched on a harbourless, surf-beaten strip of barren soil, neglecting the far better sites at Pulicat and Covelong, within a few miles. Calcutta is by no means a sanatorium to-day; but for many years after its foundation, 'the city chose by Charnock 'neath the palms,' was more of a white man's grave than even Sierra Leone. 'One year I was there, and there were reckoned in August about twelve hundred English; and before the beginning of January there were four hundred and sixty burials registered.' Job Charnock, its founder, who was one of the most singular characters in early Anglo-Indian annals, married a Hindu widow, rescued from suttee, and died Hindu himself in all but race.

It is curious to read how, two centuries ago, there were sportsmen who went out to India after big game. One would have thought it an exclusively modern idea; but it appears that in 1678, two gentlemen, Mr Limbourg and Mr Goring, came out from England, and spent three years tiger and buffalo hunting at Karwar, south of Goa, where the Company had a factory. It is much to be regretted that they left no account of their adventures. Would any *shikari* of the present day confront a tiger with such a 'fusil' as was used in the seventeenth century?

Hamilton's observations are of course confined to the coast districts of the countries he visited; but there is much shrewdness, as well as humour, in his accounts of his dealings with the rascally Governors and factors, though he writes of course from the 'interloper's' point of view in his descriptions of priest-ridden Goa; of the equally oppressive religion of Southern India—a bigoted Brahmanism, with ultra severity of caste, mixed with aboriginal devil-worship; the strange marriage, or no-marriage, customs of Malabar; the unique tenure by which the Samorin of Calicut held his throne, being obliged to hold a festival every twelve years, during which, any man who could break through his guards and slay him became his successor; the accurate description of Siam and Pegu, then lately annexed to Burma; and the dreadful glimpse into the 'private life of an Eastern king' of the worst sort, the then Rajah of Johore.

One of the oddest stories in the book is that of a cure performed by 'a noted Malaya doctor' at Malacca. One of the supercargoes of a Scotch ship was taken ill with very strange symptoms. The Dutch doctor whom he consulted advised him to send for the native practitioner, or rather conjurer, who, when he came, 'told him that he was poisoned, and if he could not tell by what poison, his cure was very desperate.' I advised my friend to let old Beelzebub (for he was a man or walking shadow of a dismal aspect, near a hundred years old) take him into his care; and he complimented the doctor with fifty Dutch dollars. The suspected party was one Mistress Kennedy, a lady of undoubted character, who kept a boarding-house for seamen at Malacca. 'The doctor called for a teacup and some fresh limes. He turned all out of the room but myself and the patient, and filled the teacup with lime juice. He muttered some words, keeping his right hand moving over the cup for three or four minutes, and then shaked his old head and looked dejected. He then muttered some other words with a higher voice, and in two minutes the juice in the cup began to boil. I put my finger in the juice, but it retained its coldness. He ordered the patient to send a servant to watch at Mistress Kennedy's door between ten and twelve, and took his leave. About eleven, the spy came and told us that Mistress Kennedy had run stark mad, making a hideous noise, and said she had seen the devil in the garden in a monstrous shape and terrible aspect. She soon after grew furiously mad, scratching and biting every one she could come at, so that they were forced to bind her. In this fit she continued till the morning, when the old conjurer came to visit her. At sight of him she grew calm and sensible. He assured her that this devil she saw should be her continual companion all her days if she did not declare whence she had the poison; which, when she did, the doctor sent for the old witch and threatened to torment her also if she did not declare what poison had been given; which she did; and he took away the devil, and the patient was well in eight or ten days; but Mistress Kennedy looked ever after disturbed, as if continually frightened.' Was this hypnotism 'suggestion' or what? It is certain that to this day there are men among these *pawangs*, as there are among Indian conjurers and witch doctors, who are able to do some very strange and inexplicable things.

Hamilton's descriptions of such plants and animals as came under his notice are very correct, and it is astonishing that with such sources of information, the naturalists of that day should have gone on copying from each other fables as old as Pliny and Arrian. The fact was that, except a few *virtuosi*, no one cared about the truth or otherwise of the descriptions of 'strange beasts,' as long as they were astonishing enough. We read, however, of one Mr Cunningham, head of the English factory at Banjermassin, in Borneo, who, says Hamilton, almost in the very words of Stanley criticising Emin Pasha, 'would spend whole days contemplating the nature and qualities of a butterfly or shellfish, and left the management of the Company's affairs to others, so every one but he was master.' To Hamilton we are indebted for a couple of 'chestnuts,' which have preserved their vitality to the present day. One is the story of the tailor who pricked the elephant's trunk with his needle, &c; and the other is that of the employé of the Company who accounted for certain missing rupees as eaten by white ants. This story really seems immortal, for in a 'globe-trotter's' book of 1890 it is related as happening in the present century. The actual fact is, that about 1680, one Potts, head of the Company's factory at Ayuthia, the former capital of Siam, accounted in this way for five hundred chests of Japanese copper which he had embezzled; and the statement seems to have passed current.

The English trade with Siam in those days was a large and profitable one. Many English were in the service of the king, even the *Shahbandar*, or collector of customs, being an Englishman; and there were also many independent European merchants. Unfortunately, the prosperity of these 'interlopers' so vexed the *dis*-Honourable Company, that they threatened Siam with war unless their rivals were expelled. Captain Weldon, who delivered this message, behaved with such insolence, that the Siamese attacked him when ashore; and on his escape, the mob made an indiscriminate massacre of all the English they could find, thus accomplishing the Company's design. Hamilton himself had a narrow escape from the machinations of Collet, the Governor of Madras, whose agent at Siam brought against him the charge of speaking treason against the king. The treason consisted in saying that the king was imposed upon—a capital offence; but, luckily for the worthy captain, the accuser was in such a hurry to bring the charge that he quite forgot his principal witness did not understand a word of Hindustani, in which the said treason was spoken; and the case was dismissed ignominiously.

There is a good deal of fine confused fighting in the book; but the war correspondent was not yet, and the particulars of battle and skirmish are curt enough, though, no doubt, the veteran adventurer in his well-earned retirement could tell stirring tales. At one time he actually blockaded the port of Acheen single-handed—it must be remembered that an East Indiaman was practically a man-o'-war in armament—and brought the rulers to terms; which is more than the Dutch have been able to do after twenty years of desultory war and expending over £25,000,000. Towards the end of his career, in 1721, he was at Bandar Abbas when it was attacked by some 4000 Baluchis. He landed thirty-six men to assist the English factory, and the garrison of about fifty beat off the looters, who, however, plundered the town of £200,000 worth of goods and carried off 14,000 captives.

The most noteworthy affair Hamilton was engaged in happened at Karwar in 1718. The Rajah of Vizapore attacked the Company's settlement with a force of some 7000 men, but was unable to take the factory. 'When our reinforcements came, we could muster in our fleet of seamen and soldiers 2250 men. When all was ready, we landed 1250 men.' With such a force, Clive or Forde would have scattered the Rajah's 7000 to the winds; 'but our fresh-water land officers were so long drawing up their men in a confounded hollow square, that the enemy, who were already in retreat, took courage, and came running towards our men, which our commandant seeing, pulled off his red coat and vanished. Some other as valiant captains as he took example, and then the soldiers followed, and threw away their arms. We lost in this skirmish 250 men (pretty well for a "skirmish!"); but the fire of the ships would not suffer the enemy to pursue, and some sailors went on the field and gathered 200 muskets, most of them loaded.'

There was not much promise of an Indian Empire in this; but here is another anecdote showing still more strongly to what the national character had come under the later Stuarts. In 1700, Hamilton was at Amoy in company with a king's ship, the *Harwich*, of fifty guns, commanded by one Captain Cock. 'The seamen,' says Macaulay, speaking of that period, 'were not gentlemen, and the gentlemen were not seamen,' but this commander was neither one nor the other. There were three ships from England, and one from Surat, loading at Amoy, whose commanders at once went to the local mandarins, and, by a bribe of five hundred taels, and representing the man-o'-war's men as dangerous ruffians, persuaded him to forbid entrance to the *Harwich*. The only reason for this act was a bit of paltry jealousy about lowering their pennants to the king's ship. However, Hamilton stood security for the good behaviour of the crew, and the *Harwich* was brought up to Amoy and careened, as the practice was, for repairs. While this was doing, Captain Cock was 'carousing' on board the Indiamen, having apparently 'made it up,' until he was sobered by the news that his ship on hauling off had got on a rock and become a wreck. Thereupon the gallant officer fell a-crying; but the captains and supercargoes of the Indiamen refused all assistance; and the crew of 182 must have perished of cold and hunger, but for the generosity of Hamilton, who fed and clothed them for a time at his own expense. He then laid the case before the *chungtock*, or Viceroy, of Fokien, 'who was amazed that any of those ships durst enter our king's dominions that had denied to assist, not only his subjects but his immediate servants;' and gave orders that no ship should be allowed to leave Amoy without taking its quota of the shipwrecked men. Thus checkmated, they consented to do so, though they made their passengers as uncomfortable as they dared. Hamilton took forty of them on board, and lent the captain one thousand dollars without acknowledgment. On arriving in England, twenty years after, he wrote to remind the captain of the circumstance; but that gentleman professed to have no recollection of the affair, 'and paid the debt of nature without taking notice of the one due to me.'

To conclude with a pleasanter anecdote, and one more in keeping with the popular notion of a sailor, 'of a comical passage between a mandarin and an English sailor. The mandarin going in his *chair* (that is, litter or palanquin) with his retinue, met a sailor with a keg of arrack under his arm, who was so mannerly as to walk aside and leave the mandarin the middle of the street; but one of his retinue gave the sailor a box on the ear. The sailor expressed himself nautically, and gave the aggressor a box in return. The mandarin sent for the English linguist [interpreter], and bade him inquire of the sailor why he gave him that affront. The sailor swore that the mandarin had affronted him, and offered to box the mandarin or any of his gang for a dollar, and with that produced it. The mandarin ordered the linguist to tell him what the sailor said, and why he pulled his money out; and when he heard, he was like to fall off his *chair* with laughing. He had a Tartar in his retinue who was famous for boxing, and called for him to try his skill on the Englishman. The Tartar was a lusty man; the sailor short but well set. The Tartars use to kick at the stomach, and the first time he kicked, the sailor had him on his back. He desired then to have a fair bout of boxing without tripping, which Jack agreed to, and so battered the Tartar's face and breast that he was forced to yield to Old England. The mandarin was so pleased with the bravery of the sailor, that he made him a present of ten taels of silver.'

It is evident that the mandarin was himself a Tartar, for Jack would not have got off so easily had he affronted the dignity of a genuine Chinese 'literate,' with his mixture of pedantry, effeminacy, and wooden-headed conceit, and therefore he might be thought fortunate in 'catching a Tartar.'

DAPHNE.

By GUY BOOTHBY.

> . . . . There is always work
> And tools to work withal for those who will;
> And blessed are the horny hands of toil.
>
> LOWELL.

TALL, angular, and peculiarly plain, she was the wife of a Queensland Bush Carrier; and it is, I believe, an accepted fact that ladies of that station are not noted either for their culture or their refinement.

Crawling with heavily laden bullock wagons across plains and never-ending scrubs would not appear to be an existence possessed of many charms, and yet I believe there is no case on record of a man or woman who, having once served his or her apprenticeship to the trade, has ever returned to a civilised life again.

In the Queensland Bush carrying-trade, you must understand, there are three main arteries, the townships of Hughenden, Longreach, and Charleville, and from each of these places there flows continually a stream of enormous table-topped wagons, bound for stations in the Great West, all more or less remote from what is generally supposed to make life worth living.

The existence of the carrier is rough to a terrible degree, and must in no way be confounded with that of the respectable, jog-trot class who ply their trade in English rural districts. Let me picture for you a night's camp of one of these nomad families.

Imagine a treeless plain, say some two or three hundred miles from civilisation, extending as far as the eye can reach on every side. In the foreground you will probably have a fair-sized water-hole, up to the side of which, as you look, lumbers an enormous wagon, piled with loading of every kind and description, and drawn by perhaps twenty bullocks. Wearied after their long day's march, the team drags up to the water and then comes to a halt with a deep grunt of satisfaction. The sun, which throughout the day has caused them untold agonies, now lies low upon the horizon, turning the dreary plain into the likeness of a waveless sea, and painting the placid water-hole with colours of ever-changing beauty. Once at a standstill, the work of unyoking commences; and after this is accomplished, the off-sider, or driver's assistant, bells certain bullocks, and conducts the herd to water and the best grass: the driver meanwhile places the yokes in proper order upon the pole, preparatory to an early start upon the morrow.

The carrier's wife, by this time, has descended from her perch on the summit of the load, and, with a crowd of nut-brown children at her heels, has set about her preparation of the evening meal. Ere it is eaten, the sun has packed his pillows in the west, and dropped into his crimson bed.

As daylight disappears, and without an interval of twilight, darkness descends upon the plain, and one by one sundry jewels drop out of the treasure-house of night to deck the canopy of heaven. The stillness is most remarkable, and later on, when each member of the tiny party has found a resting-place among the loading or beneath the wagon, it becomes even more intense, till only the whistle of a curlew, the cry of a marauding dingo, or the distant boom of the bullock bells jars upon the sleeping night.

By daybreak the community is once more astir, and when breakfast has been eaten, the teem is yoked up. Then the woman places herself and children upon the top of the wagon, the carrier takes his place and cracks his heavy whip, the bullocks sway forward, and once more the journey is resumed across the same interminable plain. So, week in week out, from year's end to year's end, the same life goes forward, never varying save when rain, or scarcity of grass, makes the track unpassable. Small wonder, therefore, that the women grow to be hard and rough, consorting, as they do, with none but the sternest of the opposite sex, and daily doing work that would test the patience and endurance of the strongest man. These are some of the folk who in reality do the building up of our Colonies, although the credit goes to another noisier, uglier, and far less useful class. But to get back to my story.

As I have said at the beginning, she was tall, angular, and peculiarly plain, and, in spite of the glaring incongruity of it, it must be recorded that her baptismal name was Daphne. Her husband was a carrier on the Hidgeree-

Kalaba track, and she was at once the brain and mainstay of his business.

My first acquaintance with them occurred on the edge of a Boree scrub, a dismal place, and more than a hundred miles removed from either of the above townships. They were camped beside a big water-hole, and on dismounting from my horse, I was introduced by the carrier, with becoming ceremony, to his wife. Great were the proofs of friendship they showed to me, and long will I cherish the memory of that rough but hearty hospitality. Next morning I went my way, they theirs, and it was not for nearly a year that we met again.

When next I heard of them, Daphne was in the township hospital, recovering from a serious accident occasioned by a fall from the wagon; and her husband, an enormously built man, with a rough manner, which, by those unskilled in such matters, might easily have been mistaken for insolence, had that very day returned with loading from the west. By inquiring after his wife, whose illness I was aware of, I touched the right string; for his eyes lit up, his voice softened, and he answered my questions with surprising meekness.

'She was getting on well,' he said; 'but all the same, it was terrible slow work.'

Now, it must be known here that although the Kalaba hospital occupies the best position in that township, even then, it is, if anything, a little less cheerful than an undertaker's showroom. Great gray plains surround it on three sides; the township, with its ugly whitewashed roofs, stares at it from the fourth; and it would be impossible to say which view would be likely to have the most depressing effect upon an invalid. I am told that Kalaba was only designed as a depôt for the Great West, and I console myself with the reflection that in the very near future the Overland Railway will obviate that necessity, and then it will be scattered to the four winds of heaven. At present it is the Decalogue turned backwards.

When my business was finished, I rode up to the hospital and left some newspapers. Daphne being the only patient, I found her occupying the best bed in the only ward. Her wiry black hair straggled in rank confusion about the pillow, while her complexion harmonised, as near as a well-tanned skin would permit, with the dingy whiteness of the counterpane. Only the great dark honest eyes lent relief to the monotony of her expression, and they were now full of something which, when read aright, spelt hopelessness of an extraordinary degree.

Towards the end of the afternoon the husband made his appearance, and, preceded by the matron, stalked into his wife's presence. For a moment he stood in the doorway, dazed, bewildered perhaps by the half darkness; then, recognising his wife, he advanced towards the bed.

'Daphne, old gal,' he said, with a little tremor in his voice, as he bent over her, 'an' 'ow's it with ee now? Ye looks better by a darned sight!'

She gave a little sigh before she replied.

'I'm nearly well now, Bill; better'n I 'ave been by a long chalk. Sit ye down, old man, and tell us 'ow it goes with the children an' the team!'

Bill sat very gingerly on the edge of the bed, and as if out of compliment to the peculiar cleanliness of the place, fell to scrubbing his face with a flaring red cotton handkerchief.

'The kids is fit, an' the team's first class!' he answered.

Then with a gesture of almost awe, he assumed possession of one of the thin brown hands upon the coverlet.

'My lass, 'ow dog poor yer 'ands has got, to be sure; but they was always pretty 'ands to my thinkin'.'

Daphne patted his great brown paws and allowed a little wan smile of gratified vanity to flicker across her face. Let the woman be ever so old and plain, she is never beyond the reach of a compliment from the man she loves.

'An' 'ow's the roads lookin' out back?' she asked.

'A1, an' no mistake; green as a leaf all the way. From here to Kidgeree Creek there's water in every hole, an' the little wild-flowers yer used to like is that thick along the track, yer can hardly see the grass for 'em. I brought yer some!'

Out of the lining of his big cabbage-tree hat, he took a tiny bunch of Bush blue-bells and placed them in her hand. It was a critical moment for both of them. He was acutely afraid of ridicule; she, for some reason she could not have explained, did not know whether to laugh or cry.

She laid the flowers on the table by her bedside, and then turned to her husband, the better to express her thanks.

'Bill,' she said softly, 'you was allus a good chap to me!'

'Nay, nay, my lass, you mustn't say that. You don't know 'ow we misses yer out yonder; things ain't the same at all without you. Make 'aste an' get well an' come back to the kids an' me, an' let's get out of this 'ere town.'

'Bill! I shan't be'——

'Shan't be what, lass?'

He looked rather anxiously down at her.

'I shan't be'—— The weak voice paused as if to think of a word, then she seemed to choke, and after that a painful silence ensued. Finally she said: 'I—I shan't be long.'

Bill gave a sigh of relief and continued: 'I'm 'avin' new tires put on the fore-wheels, an' we've got the new pair o' steers in place o' Billabong an' Blossom that were too old for work. We've got full loadin' out to the Diamantina an' back, an' when the trip's done there'll perhaps be a matter of twenty pounds to put into the stocking for the kids. Get well, my lass, an' come back to yer place on the load: the Bush wind, an' the blue sky, an' the sight o' them wild-flowers'll soon set yer right. Yer ain't feelin' any worse, are yer?'

'No, old man; the doctor says I'll be out again this side o' Sunday.'

'That's the talk! We're camped down yonder on the Creek, an' the day ye're out I'll come up an' fetch yer meself. The team'll be all fresh, the loadin' 'll be aboard, an' the very next mornin' we'll have the yokes on, an' be where a man's got room to breathe!'

'Why, Bill, I never 'eard yer talk so before! It's like what the parson, who comes here every Monday, calls poetry!'

There was an ocean of pathos in the man's reply.

'Yer see, old girl, I must talk a bit different, for yer ain't never been ill like this afore!'

Another long silence fell upon the pair. Then he rose to say good-bye, and his wife's face grew, if possible, paler than before.

'Bill!' she began falteringly, 'I've been a-tryin' all the time yer've been here to tell yer somethin', but I dunno 'ow to begin. It's this way'——

'Out wi' it, my lass. What's wrong? Ain't they been a-treatin' yer well in 'orsepital?'

'It's not that, Bill,' she answered. 'But there, I can't tell you. Flesh and blood couldn't, let alone yer wife. You must just ask the doctor, when yer get outside, if 'e's got anythin' to say agin' me walkin' with the team, will yer?'

'If yer says so, in course. But Daphne, there ain't nothin' agin' it, is there?'

'You ax 'im; 'e'll tell yer, Bill.—But 'ere's the matron coming: I guess yer'd better be goin'. Tell them kiddies their mother ain't forgot 'em!'

Raising herself with an effort, she pulled the big man's tangled head down to her, and kissed him on the forehead with a gentleness that would have been grotesque, if the sentiment that prompted it had not been so gruesomely pathetic. Then, as the matron approached the bed, he went down the corridor to find the house-surgeon.

The latter, I may tell you, was a rough man, embittered by hard work and insufficient returns; the position of house-surgeon in a Bush hospital being but little sought after by the shining lights of the profession.

When Daphne's husband entered, he was engaged writing to the Board, demanding, for the sixth time, an increase in his meagre salary.

He looked up, and seeing the man before him, said roughly: 'Well! what do you want?'

The carrier shuffled from one foot to the other with evident uneasiness.

'Beg yer pardin, sir, an' sorry for interruptin'; but the missus axed me to ax you as if it were likely yer'd have any objection to 'er walkin' alongside the team when she comes out?'

'Whose missis?—Oh! I understand: the woman in the ward there. Walk beside the team? Good heavens, man! What are you talking about? Are you mad? How on earth can she walk beside the team?'

'I mean, in course, sir, when she's well enough to come out.'

'Well enough to come out? Why, man alive! she's as well now as ever she will be. It was compound fracture of both femur, and a double amputation. *She hasn't a leg to stand on, much less to walk with!* No! No! You'd better look out for a house in the township, and find somebody to move her about for the rest of her life. She'll never be able to travel with you again.—Here! hang it, man, go outside if you're going to be ill!'

'I ax yer pardin, sir, but—if yer don't mind, I'll just sit down for a minute. Everything's—a-goin' round an' round, an' I don't somehow feel kinder well!'

THE KAFFIRS IN BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA.

MUCH has been written describing the negro race generally, many descriptions of the Kaffirs have appeared in the public prints, both before, during, and since the Zulu war. In some cases, wrong impressions regarding the manners, customs, habits, and even the *personnel* of the natives of this portion of the 'Dark Continent' have been conveyed, unwittingly, but erroneous, nevertheless. For instance, the Zulu Kaffir is sometimes spoken of as a bloodthirsty savage, a treacherous foe, an enemy to the progress of civilisation; and, on the other hand, the white colonist has been described as a grasping tyrant, intent only on reducing the savage to a state of serfdom and slavery, and ignoring him, as incapable of improvement; or if amenable to educational influences, only using his knowledge for vile and bad purposes: whereas, the facts are that the Kaffir is a good-tempered, docile, and useful member of the society which has been forced upon him; and the white man for the most part is anxious to advance his 'black brother' as fast as he shows himself willing and competent to bear the additional responsibility which a higher development of civilisation, from the very nature of the case, involves.

The native races of South Africa are split into many and numerous tribes. The Kaffirs belong to the Bantu stock, and are akin to the Bechuanas, Matabele, &c., but are quite distinct from Hottentots and Bushmen, as well as from the intrusive Malay and Hindu coolie. The physique of the aboriginal native has often been described in print: the 'noble savage' is tall, straight, and of a powerful build. This, it must be borne in mind, is a description of the Zulu warrior, the material which composed the 'Impi' or army of those 'awful' savages whose power, thanks to British arms, is now for ever broken. Chaka, Dingaan, Cetewyo (or, as some spell this last name, Ketchwayo)—these Zulu kings, possessed of despotic power of course, commanded the very flower of the young Zulus to join their regiments; but the bulk of the people are in form and physique pretty much the same as the British or any other nation—short, middle-sized, and tall—fat and thin, fleshy or lean—straight and crooked. As a rule, the more they depart from nature, and conform to civilised methods of dress and living, the oftener is disease shown amongst them. Sad to say, but this deterioration is too plainly marked to be disputed; nor is the reason far to seek. The free life spent in the open air untrammelled by clothing, the plain but wholesome diet, the hardy habits, and constant exposure to wind and weather, giving place to a residence in a town, to the restraints of clothing, to unusual feeding, to the unnatural, in fact, are surely producing corresponding results.

In the Cape Colony, the Kaffir is losing much of his pristine barbarism. Query, Is he improving under the advance he has made? He is learning to abandon the hut built of wattles and thatch, like a large beehive, and to live in a 'square-built' house, usually built of sods or unburnt bricks, containing one or two rooms with as many doors and windows, and still thatched with the long and strong grass of the country. In a few instances he lives with his family in a house built with burnt bricks, and roofed with galvanised iron or tiles: where he was formerly content with a hut, a mat, a hoe, an axe, and a blanket, he now requires furniture and clothing, ploughs, and implements.

Many of the natives of this part of the Dark Continent are embracing Christianity. The persistent labours of missionaries in their midst, the translation of the Scriptures into their tongue, the establishment of schools on lands granted by the Government; teachers paid or subsidised also by Government; schools under well-qualified and hard-working inspectors, who are thorough masters of the language--all these agencies are producing fruit. One effect upon the native is to cause a dislike to service with the white man. He must have his own house, his horse, his wagon and farm, or trade on his own account; so that it is a common remark amongst employers, 'Give me a raw heathen,' in preference to what is known as a Christian Kaffir. Then, again, unless the religion of Christ gets fully hold of a Kaffir, it is only human nature to copy the white man's vices while professing to worship his God; but that there are many true Christians amongst them is undeniable, and the Gospel is spreading rapidly by means of native agency.

The Kaffir is a born elocutionist, and the earnestness and fervour with which these native preachers and teachers conduct a religious service amongst their own people is an 'example' to the 'icily regular,' 'faultlessly dull' style of their white brethren of the 'cloth.' Of course there are, and it may be to the end of time there will be people who will find fault with missionaries, teachers, civilisation, and progress generally amongst the aborigines; but the truth will win its way in spite of them. Happily, the laws in Natal stringently forbid the sale or use of intoxicating liquor amongst the native population. The Transvaal is following this good plan; and until the Cape passes and carries out an anti-liquor law, the sad demoralisation amongst the coloured people, which is becoming a blot and reproach on Cape legislation, will increase and continue, and, unless prevented and prohibited by legal enactment, will sweep the 'noble savage,' as it did the Red Indian, and as it is doing amongst the Maoris of New Zealand, from the face of the earth.

The negro race is naturally averse to work; it might be remarked *en passant* that his white brother does not care to labour, if his wants can be supplied without complying with the universal and inexorable law, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.' Amongst the males of aboriginal tribes, this law sits very lightly—the rule, as is well known, being for the women to work while the stronger sex amuse themselves with hunting, visiting from kraal to kraal, drinking native beer ('Utyala'), and idling generally. But then the Kaffir coming under British or Boer rule, for the protection of his person and property, has a small annual tax to pay; to obtain this, he must work. His white employer always finding him food and shelter, about one month's work annually pays the tax; with one or two months more to satisfy his very moderate requirements in the clothing line, his year's labour is done, excepting in the case of young men who work to buy cows, and, with the cows, buy a wife—and this after half a century of British rule.

The abolition of polygamy has been *the* knotty question for legislators all this time, and seems as far off solution as ever. The missionary bodies, with few exceptions, have decided that no polygamist can become a church member; hence, very few indeed, however well disposed, 'colwa'—that is, believe. Of course the missionaries have good reasons for requiring a man to put away all wives but the first, stating that the women can maintain themselves better without the men than with them—but for all that, and especially where there are children, it is an unnatural wrenching of family ties, and the whole question bristles with difficulties. Of course, in the case of unmarried men and women the matter is simple enough, no polygamous marriage by Christian rites being lawful. The purchase or dowry, ten cows per wife, and if she is a very superior 'intombi' (young woman), fifteen or twenty cows, cannot be interfered with, so that the man with a large family of daughters is bound to become rich in cattle. 'Ukulobola' is the name for this wife-traffic. The missionaries are fain to allow it in the case of one wife, though perhaps under some other name.

When we tell the native that in our case 'the boot is generally on the other leg,' and the young lady often brings a dower to her husband, he tells us that is all right for the white man, but it is not *our* custom. And here comes in the mistake many Europeans make in their dealings with the natives—and all the whites, with very few exceptions, employ Kaffir or Coolie servants—they do not enter into the manners and customs of the natives. If a young man chooses to hand over to the bride's father ten fat cows and steers, who is to prevent it? especially as he knows that beef will be very plentiful at the marriage feast; and native beer—against which there is no law—will flow freely. But it may be said, it will take a young man a long time to earn the wherewithal to purchase ten, twelve, or fifteen cows. Here, again, native custom comes in. The girl's father considerately counts a cow and calf as two, nay, a cow *in* calf will pass for two; and perhaps the young man's father or elder brother or uncle will help him to a beast or two; and the bride's father will allow him a year or two's credit for two or three head of the stipulated 'Ukulobola.' So it will be seen how easily these difficulties are overcome. In short, in the matter of self-help and mutual help, the whites might often with advantage copy their dark-skinned neighbours.

The native is now settling down. The question arises, Where is he to live? The Government here steps in, and points out that so many large tracts of land are portioned out as locations; but these locations, ample before the devastating wars of Zulu chiefs were stopped by British rule, now, thanks to forty years' peaceful occupation, are becoming crowded. The surplus blacks, therefore, rent land from the white farmers and landowners, or their agents. The British reader must not suppose that the tenant finds a cottage and homestead ready to his hand on the 'three acres and a cow system;' but the farmer shows him a portion of his farm, of possibly six thousand acres; and there the native builds his hut and encloses his cattle kraal, cultivates a few acres of land, with unlimited pasturage for his cattle, sheep, and goats, for which he pays a rent of from thirty shillings to three or four pounds per hut annually. The rent he can easily raise if he is industrious; but his native laziness often prevails, and the rent is paid by the usual process of summons and seizure. When he really finds that his cattle are in danger, he tries to borrow the money. The white farmer advances the cash, or gives him 'tick' for the rent, and he works it out. But the system is eminently unsatisfactory; and this land and labour question still remains another problem which no legislation seems able to cope with.

Of this there is no doubt—the native tribes of South Africa are speedily becoming amenable to civilisation. Unlike the Red Indians, and aborigines of Australia, the Kaffir does *not* die out as the white man proceeds to occupy his country; humane laws foster the well-being of the native. In Natal especially, the increase in the black population is marked and rapid. This fine country, which, fifty years ago, contained only a few thousands of miserable refugees, hiding and fleeing from the ravages of those awful tyrants, Dingaan and Chaka, now contains a black population of about half a million, rejoicing under the benign rule of the 'Queen-Empress' Victoria. It may be that at times the younger men, during a beer-drinking bout, talk some nonsensical rant about retaking the country from the white men. These are speedily silenced by the old men, who will frequently bring both native wit and oratory to bear upon the young and impetuous braggadocios, who are speedily silenced when told that the great white Queen's 'impi' (army) would crush any rebellion with one-tenth the ease with which the savage Zulu nation was subdued. The old men will tell of most awful reminiscences, such as, 'Don't we remember when a man dare not put his head outside his hut door, except at the risk of being brained by a knobkerrie or impaled on an assegai.' They will then wax eloquent on the safety and security of all native tribes under British rule. The Amaswazi tribes were and still are anxious to come under our rule rather than that of the Boers of the Transvaal Republic; but their desire comes too late, as the Boers were entitled to claim a treaty with Great Britain giving them the right to annex Swaziland—the latter considering she has already as many black children on her hands as she can find nurses and nurseries for. This leads one to remark that the Kaffirs are, after all, only children, just emerging from heathen darkness and superstitions. Their docility is wonderful; their faith in a white man, especially an Englishman, is great; and the progress of Christianity is the hope of the nation, accompanied by all the civilising influences of steam, electricity, and modern inventions.

Native servants have formed a theme for many pens. If the native had really to work for his living, so that twelve months' engagements could be made, he would be a very good servant; his docility and good temper are all in favour of employers. They are employed at all kinds of work—as domestic servants, agricultural labourers, mechanics' assistants, porters, storemen, &c.; and a few of them learn trades, such as blacksmithing, carpentering, and shoemaking. The white mechanic need not fear much from native competition; but the Kaffir and Coolie will always keep the agricultural labourer out of the market, the climate for three or four months in the year being rather trying to a white man for outdoor work. Planters require a small staff of whites as overseers, sugar-boilers, engine-drivers, and the like. But the farmer who has sons or white dependents old enough to work, seldom employs white labour; indeed experience has proved that before a white farm-servant has been six months 'out,' he requires two Kaffirs to wait upon him.

WIND VOICES.

Wind, that art wailing through the night,
With the voice of a soul in pain!
Thou hast waked the waves that slept on the shore;
I hear them rise, and dash once more
'Gainst the sullen, fixed, and changeless rock,
Which has stood unmoved through many a shock
Of the raging storm, and the breakers white
That must sweep to the sea again.

Wind, that art wailing through the night,
With the voice of a soul in pain!
Thou hast waked the passion of wild regret,
Which slumbered so long—to rage and fret
'Gainst the pitiless, fixed decrees of life:
As well may the waves with the rock hold strife!
Back—to the tide of the Infinite,
Poor heart, that hast cried in vain!

Wind, that art wailing through the night,
With the voice of a soul in pain!
Thou hast gathered up each cry of earth
That from mortal anguish ever had birth,
At the door of the living to enter in,
Weeping for sorrow and death and sin:
Yet heart, make answer, 'God's will is right,'
And rest in His peace again.

Mary Gorges.

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DUNNOTTAR CASTLE.

On the east coast of Scotland, immediately south of Aberdeenshire, and occupying the country between the mouth of the Dee and the North Esk, lies the county of Kincardine—a district anciently known as the Mearns. Except in certain detached portions, the scenery of the county is somewhat bald and monotonous, treeless and wind-swept, more especially towards the north, where bog and moor alternate, and agriculture is checked by stretches of arid and stony wilderness. It must have been in this quarter that was situated Captain Dalgetty's patrimonial inheritance, 'the Moor of Drumthwacket, *mea paupera regna,* as we said at Marischal College.' But more to the south and east, where you come upon the valleys of Cowie and Carron, you have the beautifully wooded enclosures of Urie and Fetteresso; and still farther south the picturesque Dean of Glenbervie, and the rich and tranquil loneliness of Arbuthnott. Immediately along the coast, the land forms a kind of plateau, with a bare and wind-swept look, and presents to the waves of the wild North Sea one continuous wall of precipitous rock. At Stonehaven Bay, however, where the Cowie and Carron enter the ocean, there is a gap in the wall of rock, and inside the bay, sheltered by tall cliffs on either side, lies the pleasant and prosperous burgh of Stonehaven. To the south of Stonehaven Bay is a great inward curve or crescent of the red sea-wall of weather-worn rock; and about the middle of that curve, a large flat-headed rock, three and a half acres in extent, and standing one hundred and sixty feet above the sea, projects outwards from the land, and is almost wholly surrounded by the waves. This isolated rock forms the site of one of the oldest fortresses in Scotland, the venerable Castle of Dunnottar.

It is now in ruins, and has been so for nearly two hundred years; and its ancient lords, the Keiths, the great Earls Marischal of Scotland, they, too, have ceased to be. The ruins of the present Castle belong to various periods since the fourteenth century; but long before then its name occurs as that of a fortress. In the dim record of the wars of the seventh century, when Scot and Pict and Angle harassed each other, Dunnottar was the scene of strife; and later, in the tenth and eleventh, when the fierce Danes grounded their long-keeled boats on the sands of Cowie, and swept the neighbourhood with fire and sword, Dunnottar is again named as the scene of carnage and blood. And many a time, during the long and frequent wars between England and Scotland, the Castle was the object of siege and capture, until the day came when its barons drew their swords for the last time for Charlie, and then adieu to rock and cave, to houses and lands, to dignities and title. The life of the exile was thenceforth theirs, as it was for hundreds of other noble victims to the cause of the worthless Stuarts. Marshal Keith, the brother of the last Earl, had a distinguished career as a soldier on the Continent, and died, sword in hand, on the field of Hochkirch. He sleeps now in the Garnison-Kirche, Berlin, 'far from bonnie Inverugie; the hoarse sea-winds and caverns of Dunnottar singing vague requiem to his honourable line and him.'

The cliffs along the shore-line are here composed of a red conglomerate or pudding-stone, and the platform on which the Castle stands looks as if a huge mass had slipped down from the adjoining cliff and become anchored by its own weight in the sea. Its summit is lower in elevation than the shore behind, with which it is connected by a low narrow neck of land only a few feet above sea-level. A steep path leads down to this connecting isthmus, and from it runs upwards again towards the gateway of the Castle, which is situated in an angle of the buildings that form the outworks of the fortress. This gateway has been jealously guarded, and must have been unapproachable by an enemy before big guns were invented. Entering, you find yourself confronted with the portcullis, and beyond that a wall, in which are four embrasures for guns. From this point the entrance is formed by a covered-way, which zigzags upwards to the top of the cliff, at every point admitting of strong defence by the holders of it. But once you reach the end of this covered-way and emerge on to the green sward of the extensive Castle-yard, the sense of oppression which has seized you wears off in presence of the bright sunshine and the cool sea-breeze. For here there is no more anything formidable or threatening; the walls are shattered and crumbling, the fortifications are grass-covered and sweet with daisy and crowfoot; and what at one time must have been a scene of endless bustle and activity is now still and deserted as a churchyard.

The ruins are of great extent and interest. Dunnottar Castle must have afforded accommodation for a large number of people, and been more like the abode of a community than the residence of a family. The old keep or tower stands at its full height, but is neglected and shattered, and threatens soon to fall into the waves below. The later buildings contain a great gallery for assemblies, and form a spacious quadrangle, with a deep well in the court, filled with water, the mystery of which water-supply has long puzzled and still puzzles many wise heads. Here, too, are bakery and brewery, and all the appurtenances of a place in which were many mouths to be daily filled. Here, also, is the dismal vault into which a hundred and twenty Whigs—men, women, and children—were in the summer of 1685 thrust, and there kept for three dreadful months, to the torture of all and the death of many; those who survived being shipped abroad to the plantations.

Perhaps the most romantic incident in connection with this ancient stronghold was the preservation in it, and the rescue therefrom, of the crown, sceptre, sword of State, and other articles and jewellery forming the Regalia of Scotland. On the 1st of January 1651 these articles had been in use at the coronation of Charles II. at Scone, and were thereafter restored to the keeping of Keith as Earl Marischal of Scotland. But the progress of the civil war rendered it imperative that the royal insignia should be put in a place of security, and with this view, the distant and strong castle of Dunnottar—which, moreover, was the property of the Earl Marischal—was fixed upon as the place for the temporary security of the Regalia. The Earl himself being at this time a prisoner in the Tower of London, the defence of the stronghold of Dunnottar was entrusted to George Ogilvy of Barras, who had been trained in the German campaigns, and was therefore a soldier of experience. Ogilvy was given a garrison of one hundred men, which, though not a large number, was deemed sufficient for a fortress so singularly isolated and of so limited a compass as that of Dunnottar is. Previous to the days of gunpowder, it had been, as we have already shown, practically impregnable; but overlooked as it is at various points on the shore by higher ground, it was not well situated to defend itself against the destructive fire of artillery.

When, therefore, the English forces of the Commonwealth began to move northwards to give their attention, among other places, to the Castle of Dunnottar, the Scottish Committee of Estates became alarmed, and, in August 1651, sent an order to withdraw the Regalia from Dunnottar and convey it to a more private and secure place. But this the Governor Ogilvy refused to obey. He had been entrusted by Parliament with the keeping and safe-guarding of the insignia, and he would not resign his trust at the request or command of any inferior body. In a letter to the Lord Chancellor, he expressed his determination to defend his charge to the last in the Castle of Dunnottar, if he were supplied with men, provisions, and ammunition, of the want of all which he complained heavily. By November, the English had overrun the Mearns, and an English force was planted on the heights along the shore overlooking Dunnottar. The English commanders summoned Ogilvy, with a promise of fair terms, to surrender the Castle; but this he stoutly refused to do, expressing his resolution to defend it to the last.

The English cannonading began from the Black Hill, and then the danger of the Castle was seen to be imminent. In this emergency, thoughts seem to have been entertained of sending the Regalia away by sea; but this plan was not adopted, as English vessels were cruising all along the coasts. Finally, as the story runs, 'female ingenuity and courage found a resource.' Although the Earl Marischal was lying prisoner in London, his mother, the Countess Dowager, was in Dunnottar. She is described as a woman of masculine courage and prudence, and not disposed to forget that the charge of the Regalia was one of the honourable duties imposed upon her son as his birthright inheritance. An ingenious plan was therefore concocted for the removal of the Regalia from the Castle, and for the secreting of it in a secure place till better times should come for Scotland.

The plan was one which required the co-operation of some trustworthy person outside the fortress. The Governor's wife as well as the Dowager was in the secret; and outside they found the ally they required in Christian Fletcher, wife of the Rev. James Granger, minister of Kinneff. In prosecution of the scheme, therefore, Mrs Granger solicited and obtained from the English General permission to visit the Governor's lady within the Castle. The Regalia were then secretly delivered to Mrs Granger. The crown she concealed in her lap; while the sceptre and sword were wrapped up in a bundle of flax, which was placed on the back of a female domestic. All this was done without the knowledge of the Governor, so that, should he ultimately be compelled, as was not improbable, to surrender the Castle, he might be in a position to declare truthfully that he knew nothing about the disappearance or subsequent hiding-place of the royal insignia. Before proceeding to the Castle, Mrs Granger had left her horse in the English camp, as Dunnottar could not be approached nearer on horseback. Upon her return to the camp, therefore, she accounted for the presence of the domestic with the flax by stating that she was having it conveyed home to be spun and manufactured into cloth for Mr Ogilvy. The English General did not suspect any treachery, and is said even to have courteously assisted the lady to mount her horse; she, with the crown in her lap, being thus placed perilously on the verge of discovery. But she retained her presence of mind, thanked the officer for his courtesy, and so departed triumphant. The minister of Kinneff and his wife buried the various articles comprising the Regalia in different places in the church; and thither they went from time to time at night, to make sure by inspection that all was safe. Upon the Restoration in 1660, the Regalia were once more returned into the custody of the Government.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XXI.—MISS BRYNE VERGES.

'SUCH news for you, my darling,' cried Miss Bryne one morning. 'Why, hey-day, what is the matter?'

'Matter, aunt? Oh, nothing.'

'But you looked so dull and *distraite*, my dear. Don't you want to hear my news?'

'Yes, aunt, of course.'

'Well, you know how Brant has been worried about business matters lately at the works.'

'I did hear something about it, aunt, but I did not pay much attention.'

'Oh, but you should, my dear, when you know how he has devoted himself to properly carrying on the business.'

'Yes, aunt, I suppose I should; but of late I'——

'Yes, yes, my darling, I know; and I ought not to have spoken so. It was very unfeeling,' said Miss Bryne tenderly.

'I am sure you did not mean to be unkind, aunt,' said Rénée, responding affectionately to a caress. 'You could not be.'

'That's very nice of you, my love. But there: let me tell you my news. Poor Brant has been so troubled, you know, on account of the misunderstanding which he had with Mr Wynyan.'

The red blood flushed into Rénée's cheeks, and then rapidly ebbed, leaving her of waxen pallor and with a peculiar brightness in her eyes.

'I never knew quite what it meant, and I daresay there were faults on both sides. For poor Brant has a dreadful temper sometimes. But there, as I said, I don't quite know what it all meant, and I don't want to know. I daresay Brant was rude to him, and Mr Wynyan would not put up with it. Let that rest. You know Brant complained a great deal about Mr Wynyan leaving things in confusion at the office.'

'Yes, aunt, I remember hearing Brant say that.'

'Well, my dear, that trouble is all at an end, and Mr Wynyan is back at the office, and everything is going on quite right.'

Rénée sat gazing straight before her with her brow slightly contracted.

'Well, my dear,' said Miss Bryne, 'why don't you speak?'

'I have nothing to say, aunt.'

'But aren't you pleased?'

'No, aunt.'

'Oh, nonsense, my dear. I'm sure that you must be, for it is so important that everything should go on right at the works.'

'Is it, aunt?' said Rénée with assumed indifference.

'Why, of course, my dear. So much depends upon it; and it is quite a relief to hear that Mr Wynyan is back. I thought you would be delighted.'

'Indeed, aunt! Why should I be?'

'Rénée!—Well, there, my dear, I will say no more. Perhaps I ought not even to have hinted at such a thing just yet, but after what has passed'——

'Aunt!' cried Rénée, with her eyes flashing, 'pray be silent: never let me hear you speak like that again.'

Miss Bryne looked at her niece aghast, and for some moments she was silent. But she could not contain herself.

'Times have altered, my dear,' she said rather stiffly. 'A few years ago that is how I might have spoken to you: now it is I who am taken to task.'

'I beg your pardon, aunt, if I have said anything unkind; but you forced it from me.'

'Perhaps so, my dear; but I cannot help feeling a little shocked. A few months ago you used to colour with pleasure at the very mention of Mr Wynyan's name.'

'And now, aunt, I never wish to hear his name again.'

'And pray, why not, Rénée?'

'Aunt!'

'I must speak, my dear, standing to you as I do as your nearest relative—taking a mother's place as I have for so many years. If there is any misunderstanding between you and Mr Wynyan, it must be some trivial matter that ought to be cleared up. Young people's happiness is too serious to be trifled with.'

'Aunt, you will compel me to leave the room,' cried Rénée.

'I beg, my dear, if you have any respect for me, that you will stay. I can see plainly enough that there has been some quarrel between you.'

'Aunt, there has been none. How could there be? You speak as if—as if'——

Rénée ceased speaking and turned scarlet.

'You two were engaged, you were going to say, my dear. No, I don't speak like that, because of course you were not; but I am discriminating enough to know something about such matters, and it was very plain to see what Mr Wynyan's feelings were. Only last time at the Villar Endoza's, I saw enough to convince me.'

'Aunt, you are mistaken,' cried Rénée hotly.

'No, my child, I assure you I am not,' said Miss Bryne reprovingly. 'Ah, Rénée, my dear, if it had been my fate to be loved by such a man when I was your age, how different my life might have been. No, no; don't interrupt me, dear. I must speak, for really you are verging, Rénée; you are verging, my dear. Don't wreck your happiness and his.'

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'Aunt! absurd!' cried Rénée angrily; but feeling, in spite of her indignation against Wynyan, a strange subtle kind of pleasure in listening to her aunt's words.

'Perhaps so, my dear. Sometimes I think that love is altogether absurd; but it is a part of our nature, and we cannot master it. You surprise me, my dear, by this sudden show of indignation against one whom I know to be all that is manly and good.'

'Do you hold a brief for Mr Wynyan, aunt?' cried Rénée, bitterly contemptuous now. 'Has he bribed you with soft words to intercede for him?'

'I am right,' cried Miss Bryne, with a smile full of triumph. 'Then you two have quarrelled.—But no, my dear, he needs no one to hold a brief for him. He is man enough to plead his own cause.'

Again there was a peculiar kind of pleasure in listening to Wynyan's defender, and Rénée made no attempt to leave the room; while Miss Bryne went on talking till, had there been a listener, the idea impressed upon such a one would have been that the speaker was addressing a girl of ten or twelve years old, admonishing her about some slip in etiquette; and though Miss Bryne's words often bordered upon the absurd, and tortured her niece, Rénée sat as if it were a satisfaction to suffer.

It was not until she was alone an hour later that she gave full vent to the agony she suffered—her indignation against Wynyan, for she knew now that she had slowly and imperceptibly grown to love him—to love and give her whole heart to one who had proved himself utterly unworthy of the gift.

But all was at an end now: she would never bestow another thought upon him, she determined; but she was growing more and more awake to the fact that it would be next to impossible to keep her vow.

CHAPTER XXII.—EDGE AGAINST EDGE.

'Ah, Count, take a seat, pray. A cigarette? Glad to see you. What can I do? Money?'

'No,' said the Deconcaguan minister, sinking into the luxurious chair to which Levvinson pointed—'no, it is not a case of money, and I am in doubt whether you can help me.'

'I am glad you have come to try,' said Levvinson, showing his white teeth.

'I came because you are so mixed up with the business,' said Endoza, lighting the cigarette he handed to him.

'What is it—the new loan? No, you said it was not money.'

'It is about that motor.'

'Oh, that,' said Levvinson, smiling. 'Ah, I was a true prophet, Count. I told you that I had my man.'

'Yes, you were correct, but'——

'But what? Will not the motor mote?'

'Motor mote, Mr Levvinson? Please to remember that I am not an Englishman.'

'I beg your pardon, Count. I meant will not the invention work?'

'No. I am informed that it is absolutely necessary we should have over there an Englishman—an engineer who thoroughly understands the mechanism. We must have such a one, at once.'

'Now you are approaching the impossible. No: why not persuade a certain gentleman to go?'

'You mean Brant Dalton?'

'Yes.'

'Useless. He has not the brains.'

'He had the brains to obtain what you wanted.'

'Yes; but any man could have done that. Useless, my good sir—useless for what we want. You must find me some one else. You can?'

Levvinson was silent for a few moments, and then he smiled.

'Ah,' said Endoza, 'you can find him?'

'Yes; I have found him. One who thoroughly understands the whole invention, who has quarrelled with the firm, and left them. He will jump at the opportunity.'

'Mr Wynyan?'

'Yes.'

'No, Mr Levvinson,' said the Count, sending a ring of smoke upward, and looking through it; 'you are in fault this time. Try again.'

'But I assure you, my dear sir.'

'And I assure you. I tried Mr Wynyan hard.'

Levvinson winced. He did not like people to forestall him.

'He was ready to accept my proposal.'

'He bit, and you struck too soon!' cried Levvinson triumphantly.

'No,' replied Endoza coldly. 'All went well; but before we could come to terms, he had an offer from the other side, and he writes me word that it is impossible, for he has returned to the firm.'

'You should have trusted me with the task, Count. I should not have let him slip through my fingers.'

'A polite way of telling me that I have what you call bungled it, Mr Levvinson,' said Endoza with a contemptuous smile. 'Very well; have it so. Go on with the matter, and carry it out your way. You have some one else.'

'No. There were only two men who thoroughly understood the invention, and one is dead.'

'Dalton. Yes,' said Endoza, bowing his head.

'Wynyan is the other. You must have him.'

'But I tell you he is not to be had,' said Endoza haughtily.

'I do not say he is not to be had,' said Levvinson with a smile. 'Every man, according to my experience, has his price. Is it of such great importance that you should have this boy? Have you no one yonder who can find it all out?'

'You know it is impossible.'

'Of course. Very well, then, you must have Wynyan.'

'It is absolutely vital that we should have him. But how?'

'That is my business. Pay me, Count, and this negotiation shall be carried out.'

'Very well, my dear sir. I always have paid you well. I have even been generous. What sum do you wish to name?'

'Ah, this is a different reward, Count. I do not wish for money.'

'What then? You do not care for a foreign title?'

'Not a straw.'

'Very well, then, what is it?'

Levvinson was silent for a few minutes, and the Count went on smoking in the calmest manner, and looking upward through the rings he formed.

'Count,' said Levvinson at last.

'I am all attention, my dear sir,' said Endoza without looking round. 'Go on, pray.'

'I wish to marry.'

'You? Indeed! You almost surprise me. I would almost say, do not. A wife would hamper a man of your genius. But why should you not. A young lady, of course?'

'Of course.'

'Young and beautiful. You wish me to find you such a wife?'

'I do.'

'And rich?'

'Money is pleasant, but I do not exact that.'

'Then the task is easy, my dear Levvinson. I know I can let you choose amongst a dozen.'

'Thank you; but my choice is made.'

Endoza had inhaled a sufficiency of tobacco smoke; but for some moments he did not exhale it. Then slowly: 'You have made your choice?'

'Yes; and I believe my passion is returned. Miss Villar Endoza has upon more than one occasion'——

'Sir!'

'Count!'

'Are you mad!' cried the Count, starting up. 'Curse your presumption! You dare to think that such a thing is possible?'

'I do.'

'But do you know that on the day of my daughter's marriage I can endow her with a hundred thousand pounds?'

'I have no doubt of your ability, sir. I should probably expect as much; and for my part, I can and will settle double that amount upon her.'

'Such insolence! You forget, sir, who I am.'

'By no means, sir. You are the scheming representative of a very shady, unstable Central American government.'

'How dare you!'

'Because I have the whip-hand of you, Count. You cannot afford to throw me over, as you have served every one else.'

'Sir, you have been well paid for all your services.'

'Not fully yet. Isabel shall be my quittance in full.'

'Marry my daughter to a Jew!'

'You are contemptuous, Count. You would ennoble your child by an alliance with a son of the greatest race that has existed among civilised nations.'

'A nation of exiles. Mr Levvinson, do you know my descent?—the purest Castilian.'

'Castilian!' cried Levvinson, laughing contemptuously. 'My dear Villar Endoza, it is my business to know, and I know you and your descent. Possibly there is Castilian blood in your veins, but shall I trace out for you your descent on the female side? It would perhaps be too rough upon you to talk of half-bloods born in a bankrupt human volcano; but you force me to be plain.'

'This is insufferable, sir,' cried Endoza, fuming.

'No, sir; human nature can suffer a great deal, and live and prosper, as the history of my nation will teach you. My good sir, you talk of stooping to an alliance with me; do you know—yes, of course you do—that if some enemy were to spread malicious reports about my stability, and there were a run upon my credit, I have but to go to the moneyed men of my people, state my case, and I can be backed up with unlimited credit? While if I opened my mouth in the city and said a tithe of what I know, your house would be invaded by a mob of trembling shareholders, wrecked before the police could interfere; and as for you—well, to use a slang term common among us—I presume that you would have made yourself scarce.'

'Mr Levvinson!' began Endoza, sinking back in his chair, while the cigarette, which he had let fall, began to communicate its fire to the thick piled carpet, and a tiny thread of evil-odoured smoke arose, making Levvinson start forward, and the Count shrink as if from an expected blow.

'Don't be alarmed, sir,' said Levvinson, tightening his lips into a smile. 'I am well insured, but no money would recompense me for the loss of the little treasures of art which I have been collecting for years.'

'I wish to say a few words to you, sir,' began Endoza, trying hard to maintain his air of dignity.

'One moment, and I have done,' said Levvinson. 'I was going to add, that if in addition I whispered a few of our secrets in the West End, do you know what society would say?'

Endoza gasped.

'I'll tell you, sir: it would surely be "not at home" to Count Villar Endoza; and society's sons would discuss you at the clubs, and say that you were little better than a swindler—her daughters that it was quite time that they ceased to know beautiful little Isabel.'

'Mr Levvinson!'

'I have just ended my long statement of affairs, my dear sir,' said Levvinson, handing the cigarettes before taking another. 'A light? These are very good, my own selection—Dubec. You see I never allow a man to best me, Count. When you came to me some three years ago, to get my help to float your government loans, you held out the same bait to me that you hold out to others. I am not young; I am not an inflammable boy; but I was impressed and I waited. I calmly watched while the bait was offered here and there, and I did not feel disturbed, for I saw your game, and knew that it would be withdrawn as soon as the fool had served your turn. As for me, I meant that it should not be snatched away.

When I mean business, I am pretty keen from long sharpening upon rough people. I meant business then; I have gone on meaning business. I think I may say that the lady is willing to accept me, or she would not have thanked me so prettily for the suite of valuable pearls I sent her.'

'You sent her a suite of pearls?' cried the Count. 'I did not know.'

'Indeed! Never mind; only a proof that little beauty and I are at one. Your cigarette is out, Count. Take another; twice lit tobacco is so bad.'

Endoza threw away the little paper roll, and lit another, Levvinson offering the taper in the most blandly courteous way.

'Ah,' he said with a sigh, 'she is very beautiful: pearls suit her to perfection. Count, with such a daughter, you ought to be a happy man.'

'I am, Levvinson, I am,' cried Endoza earnestly.

'It will be hard for you to lose her, I know, but you should not be irritated.'

'My dear Levvinson, I was put out about Mr Wynyan's conduct. There, I own it. We two must not quarrel.'

'It would be a great pity, my dear sir. We can neither of us afford such a—shall I say—luxury?'

The Count smiled, and began once more to make rings of tobacco smoke, perfectly now, for the atmosphere had become calm.

'You are right, my dear sir,' he said, 'and verbal encounters are disturbing.'

'Very,' said Levvinson. 'I have been thinking that perhaps for the dear child's sake, it would be advisable for you to have something in the form of a title conferred upon me. You and I, Count, know the value of those things, but they sound well in society, and look attractive in print.'

'I should certainly propose something of the kind, if I found my dear child had—er—any wishes in your direction.'

'Satisfy yourself about that, my dear Count,' said Levvinson smiling; 'and now that we understand one another, suppose we go back to business. Now then, about this mechanical genius, we must have him, must we not?'

'It is a stern necessity, my dear sir, but what can you do?'

'I hardly know yet. Fortune favours those who try, though. Be quite at your ease. I feel no qualms. It may be costly, my dear Count, but I am so deeply interested in your success—now'——

He paused, and the eyes of the pair met in a long scrutinising look, and then the financier went on.

'I shall spare neither effort nor expense, Count, so make yourself easy. Going?'

'Yes: I have other engagements. We shall be seeing you soon, of course?'

'Of course,' said Levvinson meaningly, as he too rose and touched the electric bell.

'Rather sooner than I intended,' said Levvinson, walking slowly to a mirror as soon as he was alone, and gazing long and steadfastly at his face. 'Ah! there's no deceit in that,' he said softly. 'Years make their mark upon the body in one way, upon the brain in another. Never mind: pearls, diamonds, opera-boxes, carriages, and a high place in society—those little adjuncts will smooth out a good many wrinkles for me, my pretty little creole. I'm not the first man who showed his weakness for a beautiful face.'

He walked away, took and lit a fresh cigarette.

'Now then, business,' he said to himself; and his face looked ten years older. 'Wynyan back. He and Brant cannot row long in the same boat together, and Wynyan is not business-like enough to have made a tight bargain. They must quarrel before long, over one of two things—the lady or the business. Let me see.'

There was a long pause, during which the nebulous thoughts busy in the schemer's mind began to crystallise slowly.

'Yes,' he said; 'that might do—that might do; but I want something more, something stronger, that would go off with a sudden explosion, and blow him our way at once. Let me see—let me see. Come, Fate, if you want to make a good knock-down blow at the poor wretch, now is your time!'

Levvinson's face smoothed again, and he looked ten years younger.

'Something will come,' he said with a smile; 'something will come. Am I superstitious? Perhaps so: a little. It is the eastern blood. Not enough of it to interfere with common sense, but I would stake my existence that our dear father-in-law elect is thinking about me at the present moment, and calculating his next move. All in vain, my dear Count. You are a clever adversary, and the game has become pleasant. Go on; but I have you at my mercy, and can say "check" when I like, make one more move, and say "mate."'

Naturally enough Endoza was thinking about him, as he rolled along in his quiet-looking brougham.

'The little puss! she has been playing with him,' he mused. 'A great man, Levvinson; but like the rest of us, you have the weak spot. I hardly thought it. Well, we shall see. She would never have him, even if I wished it. Yes, we must wait and see. He is very useful, and he will work now in the way I wish. What puppets people are!'

NEW METHODS OF ILLUMINATION.

Fairy palaces, whether situated in the demesne of Slumberland, or in the equally enchanting dominions of the Brothers Grimm or Hans Andersen, or in the Land of the Genii, are always associated with brilliant light. In the great hall of the palace there is, perhaps, a wonderful jewel whose radiance is sufficient to fill the aisle; or, instead of a jewel, it may be a roc's egg, or some strange talisman; but it is the light that is to be the means of impressing us, and not the material substance from which it emanates. The castles of the wicked enchanters are, if only by contrast, dark and gloomy. The good and the beautiful are always associated with light, whilst things evil are relegated to obscurity and darkness. These old folk-tales are sufficient evidence of the importance the human race has always attached to the illumination of its dwellings; and the increased demand for more light both in our streets and in our homes is a sign of progress in the right direction. Fortunately, Science, our fairy godmother, enables us to gratify our taste; and within the last few years we have seen the rise of both the arc and incandescent systems of electric lighting, the reduction of the cost of mineral oil to less than one-fourth of its former price, and the cheapening of gas by about a half. For many years, although the price of gas continued to fall, no improvement took place in the method of burning it, and a large proportion of the light it was capable of giving was lost. Recently, however, inventive energy seems to have been lavished on our gas supply, with most beneficial results. We have had the Albo-carbon Light; the regenerative burners of Wenham and Siemens; the Fahnehjelm system, to be used with water-gas; the incandescent mantle of Auer von Welsbach, and now we have, by Professor Vivian B. Lewes, a new illuminant in the shape of a gas called Acetylene. This discovery is by far the most remarkable of them all, as we shall see later.

The first of the series is a method for enriching coal-gas just before it passes to the burner with a constituent of high illuminating power, known to the public as albo-carbon, and to the chemist as naphthaline. This naphthaline is the greatest bugbear of the gas-maker, for it condenses in the mains in white silky flakes, especially in cold weather, and is frequently the means of stopping up the smaller pipes. The characteristic odour of coal-gas is due chiefly to the naphthaline it contains; the strong odour possessed by the hydrocarbon being one of the drawbacks to the Albo-carbon Light. For use in this system, the naphthaline is stored in a globe, through which the coal-gas passes on its way to the burner; the reservoir being placed over the flame, so that naphthaline is constantly being volatilised and carried forward to be burnt with the gas. It is a very economical system, and the light is pleasant; but the inartistic appearance of the reservoir suspended over the flame, and the odour of the illuminant, have militated somewhat against it. The principle of the regenerative burners of Wenham, Siemens, and others is the same: they aim at increasing the temperature of the flame by using the hot burnt gases to heat both the incoming gas and the air required to burn it. By this means—by burning hot gas in hot air—a very considerable increase of illuminating power is obtained.

Before proceeding further, it would be well to consider why burning coal-gas acts as an illuminant. Not long ago Professor Smithells showed the structure of flame by a number of beautiful experiments, in which he separated the different zones of the flame from one another. He found that a luminous flame is composed of three principal regions: first, the dark region, where the inflammable gas issues from the jet or wick, as the case may be, and where it has not yet mixed with the air necessary for combustion; next, a yellow region of partial combustion, the luminous zone, filled with solid particles of incandescent carbon, formed by the decomposition of the gases rich in carbon, owing to the intense heat radiated from the third or outer zone, where complete combustion is going on. Professor Smithells proved that the luminosity of a flame is due to the incandescent particles of carbon filling the zone of partial combustion. If the inflammable gas is mixed with air before it is burnt, the flame becomes non-luminous, for the particles of carbon are burnt as quickly as they are formed. Some inflammable gases, such as water-gas, possess no constituents rich in carbon, and, consequently, although these gases are useful for heating purposes, they give no light of their own accord. Now, it stands to reason that if we can introduce something into the flame that will take the place of the incandescent carbon particles without burning away, we shall at once convert the non-luminous flame into a luminous one. This is accomplished by the Fahnehjelm comb, which is composed of tiny rods of magnesia arranged in the form of a comb. It is heated to incandescence when the flame plays upon it and gives out abundance of light. The lime-light is an application of the same principle: a cylinder of lime is raised to an intense heat by the colourless oxyhydrogen flame, and an almost blinding light radiates from the heated portions.

The most successful substitute, however, for the carbon particles of the ordinary flame is the ingenious mantle invented by Auer von Welsbach. It is made by soaking a cone of muslin in a solution of the rare earth Thoria, which bears a chemical resemblance to lime. The muslin is then heated very strongly to harden the thoria, and soaked in collodion, so as to make it easy to handle and transport. When required for use, the mantle is hung in position from a rod of magnesia, and directly a light is applied, the collodion burns away, leaving a fine network of thoria, so arranged as to occupy the hottest portion of the flame from a non-luminous atmospheric or 'Bunsen' burner. The mantle, when hot, gives out a brilliant light equivalent to nearly sixty candles for the small consumption of three cubic feet of gas per hour, an ordinary batswing burner giving from five to ten candles with this consumption. The advantage of a burner of this description is that it works equally well with gas of low illuminating power as with rich gas. Ordinary coal yields about thirteen-candle gas; but the local Acts of Parliament require that sixteen-candle gas shall be sent out from the works in London, and richer gas still in the northern towns, the difference being made up with oil gas and cannel coal. The addition of these few extra candles to the illuminating power of the gas nearly doubles the cost of producing it, so that if every one used some form of incandescent burner, or an arrangement for enriching the gas with albo-carbon or acetylene on the consumer's side of the meter, we should pay much less for our gas and burn very much less of it.

The drawbacks to the use of the incandescent mantle are its brittleness and the slightly hard greenish tinge of the light. In spite of its fragility, the mantle usually lasts in good condition for several months, frequently being used for more than a year, and in any case its life is as long as that of the carbon filament of the incandescent electric light. The greenish appearance of the light is due to the presence of another rare earth, Lanthana, with the Thoria, as an impurity. The light is already much whiter than it was at first, and as better methods are found for purifying the Thoria, the greenish tinge will entirely disappear. At present the green colour can be eliminated by using globes of pink glass, the two complementary colours, green and red, neutralising one another. Curiously enough, the idea of employing a mantle of rare earths was suggested to the discoverer when searching for something to replace the carbon filament in the incandescent electric light. As the carbon filament is combustible in air, it has to be enclosed in a very complete vacuum, and this vacuous globe is the most costly part of the apparatus. If the filament of carbon could be replaced by a filament of incombustible material, that would answer the purpose equally well, the vacuous globe could be dispensed with, and it was in searching for this desideratum that Herr von Welsbach discovered the incandescent mantle for gas-light.

In a lecture delivered to the Society of Arts, Professor Vivian B. Lewes promised us a greater advance in illumination than any we have yet described. The project is no less a one than the synthesis or manufacture of illuminating hydrocarbons direct from their elements. It has long been known that acetylene, the lowest and simplest compound of carbon and hydrogen, can be obtained by filling the globe of an electric arc lamp with hydrogen; the intense heat enabling the hydrogen to combine with the carbon forming the electric terminals. This, however, would be an expensive method to use in practice, and, instead of forming carbide of hydrogen (acetylene), carbide of calcium is made by fusing lime (the oxide of calcium) with coal, coke, or any form of carbon, in an electric furnace. This carbide of calcium is a gray, somewhat metallic-looking powder, which yields acetylene when water is allowed to drip upon it; the calcium taking the oxygen of the water to form lime again, whilst the carbon combines with the hydrogen. It appears, from Professor Lewes's lecture, that this process is actually at work on a commercial scale in the United States, having been perfected by an American engineer, T. L. Wilson. The importance of the discovery can hardly be over-estimated, for from acetylene we can build up the ground storeys, as it were, of all the great series of organic bodies. Acetylene will combine with hydrogen to form ethylene; and from this, by absorption in concentrated oil of vitriol and dilution, we obtain alcohol; and from alcohol, ether and many other substances. In a similar way we can go through the whole series of the paraffins, from benzoline oil to solid paraffin wax, and form also their derivatives: glycerine, soaps, fats and oils, tartaric, citric, and other acids, and thousands of different bodies. By passing acetylene through a red-hot tube, we can form benzene, naphthaline, anthracene, and other bodies of that series. When we have once obtained benzene, what can we not obtain? It makes our senses whirl to think of the endless vistas of compounds: carbolic acid, aniline, alizarine, pyrogallic acid, and heaven knows what besides. Of course, the formation of benzene and other things from our starting-point, acetylene, is only practised in the laboratory at present, but it does not follow that it will be so long. In fact, given carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, and oxygen, together with the heat of the electric arc, we can build up the whole world of organic chemistry. The dread secrets of life and death seem almost within our grasp, for these processes are those of Nature herself. There is no reason, indeed, why, when we learn to utilise the heat of the sun's rays, and the power of the winds and tides as electrical energy, we should not build up for ourselves everything that we require from our food to our garments.

All this peering into futurity, however, is a digression, and we will return to our acetylene, for it is in respect to its illuminating properties that it occupies a place in this article. Acetylene itself is a colourless, rather heavy, gas, with an unpleasant characteristic odour. It is produced when a flame is cooled by impinging on cold metal; and one of the laboratory methods of preparing acetylene is to burn a gas jet in a cold metal tube. When a 'Bunsen' burner or a gas stove 'lights back,' it is the unpleasant smell of this substance that pervades the room. Acetylene is poisonous in the same way as carbon monoxide is, for it takes the place that oxygen should occupy in the red colouring-matter of the blood, so that it is dangerous to breathe air containing it for any length of time. Fortunately, its smell is so peculiar that the smallest leak would be noticed, and there would be little danger of its forming an explosive mixture with air, or existing in a room in poisonous quantity. The great value of acetylene lies in its remarkable illuminating properties, for, compared with coal-gas giving sixteen candles, acetylene gives a light equal to two hundred and forty candles. It is necessary to burn the gas from small flat-flame burners, when used alone, as otherwise it would smoke; so that we shall illuminate our rooms with one or more flames the size of a candle, but giving twenty-five times the light.

The carbide of calcium from which the acetylene is made is easily fusible, and it is proposed to cast it in sticks twelve inches long by one and a quarter inches in diameter, weighing one pound, and evolving five cubic feet of acetylene when placed in water. Steel cylinders will be made, sixteen inches long by four inches in diameter, in which one of these sticks can be placed together with the requisite amount of water. When the stick has been introduced, the lid will be screwed on, and the exit of the gas controlled by a valve when required for use, the five cubic feet of gas compressed in it being capable of giving a light of twenty-five candles for ten hours. In addition to the sticks, acetylene, which is as compressible as carbonic acid, will be liquefied and sold in steel cylinders fitted with regulating valves. The gas contained in one of these would be sufficient for lighting a small country house for some time, and will prove a great boon to people living in out-of-the-way places. The light given by burning acetylene is a soft white light, without any of the cold hard appearance that characterises some of the newer methods of lighting, and it will, according to Professor Lewes, have the advantage of cheapness. We have it, on his authority, that the calcium carbide is being made in America for four pounds a ton, so that the sticks will cost about one halfpenny. The cost of the gas will be about six shillings and sixpence per thousand cubic feet, equivalent to coal-gas at sixpence per thousand feet, candle for candle.

If our hopes as regards its cheapness are only partially realised, the discovery of the commercial production of acetylene will prove to be an immense boon to the whole community, including, rather paradoxically, both the gas and electric-light companies. The latter will put up electric furnaces, so as to run their dynamos all day making carbide of calcium instead of having them lie idle, and will be able to charge much less for the current they send out during the dark hours. They will hand over the greater proportion of the carbide to their *quondam* enemies, but now fast friends, the gas companies, who will send out a gas of strong heating but low illuminating power at a price of about eighteenpence per thousand cubic feet, and enrich it inside the consumer's house with acetylene up to any required standard. Gas will be much more largely used for heating purposes; less coal will be burnt; and the dwellers in our cities will enter into a new elysium of brilliant sunshine unclouded by loathsome fogs.

THE MYSTERY OF THE GOLDEN LLAMA.

CHAPTER II.—THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY.

THAT night was the first of many pleasant evenings that I spent in Almirez' company. I grew almost as interested in his collections as he himself. I assisted him in his laborious task of arranging and classifying them. We talked together on the subject of them night after night; and the more I saw of him, the stronger his charm of manner grew upon me. I felt myself lucky to have made the friendship of such a man. And so the time drew on, through the winter months and into the early spring.

And then occurred the first of those incidents, the horror of which is with me still.

On the evening of the 20th of March—the date has been impressed indelibly on my memory by the events which followed—Almirez came down to my room rather earlier than usual. Strictly speaking, it was my turn to have visited him on that night, for we were very regular in our habit of entertaining each other on alternate days; but he excused his breach of the general custom on the ground that he would be spending the following evening away from home—'a rare circumstance for so lonely a man as myself,' he explained, with his charming smile; 'but one no less gratifying because it is unexpected'—and so he had desired to enjoy a double allowance of my society that night, by way of compensation.

Naturally, I was curious to learn the nature of his engagement on the following evening, for during the whole time that I had known him, Almirez had hardly spent one evening away from the lodgings.

'It is a little surprise,' he said—'a dinner to which some gentlemen who are interested in my scientific researches have done me the honour to invite me. I would willingly have had you included in the company, my dear friend, had I been free to choose, for I cannot sufficiently estimate the value of which you have been to me in my work in London; but as I am only a guest—you understand? It cannot be. Still it is very agreeable of the gentlemen; and I am deeply recognisant of the honour they do me. It will be, I fear, a farewell dinner for me,' he went on slowly, with a shade of sadness in his voice. 'You know the step that I have contemplated for two months past—my return to exile? I feel that it is a step that must soon be taken. This air of London, this confinement, this tameness of life, depraves and weakens me. It robs me of my vigour. Alas! my dear friend, I must go. Not yet! Not yet'—seeing my surprise, perhaps my look of disappointment—'not yet for a week, a month—who knows? But the time has come.'

I don't know how I expressed my regret at his departure. I know that it was very genuine.

'And that brings me, my dear friend,' he continued more gaily, 'to a subject on which I wish to converse with you. You know, I feel sure, of what assistance you have been to me; I need not say again how much I am in your debt. But I would wish, if I may, to prove it to you. I would wish, before I go away, to make some little present to you, which should always remind you—No, no; do not interrupt me! I will have my own way!—which should remind you of those winter months that you have known Juan Almirez. My friend, I have not failed to notice how you have taken a fancy to my little Peruvian treasure, my little golden llama. I do not forget how it was the first of all my treasures that ever I showed to you. Will you do me the honour to accept it? Its associations, such as they are, will be heightened in my estimation by its memorial of yourself.'

It was in vain for me to refuse, to plead that, if he must give me anything, it should be something on which he placed less value. Almirez was inflexible. He would take no denial. In the end he gained his point, and went up-stairs to fetch the golden llama.

He brought it down to me, packed up in a wooden box, and placed it in my hands without a word. He would hear no thanks. He had made up his mind long ago to give it to me, he said, and I should hurt him more grievously than I could imagine by refusing it. 'It is true, my dear friend,' he repeated, with his quaint smile—'more grievously than you can possibly imagine.' To tell the truth, the golden llama had always had a great attraction for me ever since that first night when I had been so much struck by its appearance; and, though I felt reluctant to deprive Almirez of what I knew he valued so highly, I could not but be gratified at the kindness of his thought.

To the best of my recollection, Almirez had never been more merry, more lightly jocular, than he was that night. We sat talking together till a late hour; and, when we parted, he referred to the evening of the next day but one, and warned me laughingly not to be late in keeping my appointment to come up to his room.

I overslept myself the following morning, and did not see Almirez, as I generally did, before he started for the Museum. When I awoke, it was with a racking headache. As the day wore on, my headache grew better; but I fell into a state of restlessness and depression such as I had never before experienced. I had suffered at times from lowness of spirits, it is true: the monotony of the life in London, the uncertainty—or, as I sometimes thought, the certain hopelessness—of my elected vocation, the change from the freedom and wildness of my Northern home-life, had all told severely upon my nervous organism; but, looking back upon that time, I feel confident to say that never before nor since were my sufferings so acute, so persistent, so extraordinary in their character, as they were upon this day. I could not work. In vain I sat at my desk and strove to collect my thoughts and brace myself up for a mental effort. In vain I paced the room wearily, hour after hour. In vain I tried to shake off the horrible black phantom of despondency that seemed to be crouching over my head, and squeezing the life out of me with its stifling grip upon my neck. I panted for the open air, for the movement and the company of the streets. In vain! I returned from my hour's walk exhausted, quivering in every nerve, haunted with some strange terror that made me glance fearfully behind me, as I hurried up the empty street, and trembled at the sound of my own footsteps on the echoing pavement. Yet within the house it was still worse. My room—lighted as it was with every illuminant that I had at my disposal—seemed dark and close—darkened by the presence of a myriad of unseen shapes that flitted unceasingly between the light and my aching eyes, gathered in dizzily revolving masses in the corners of the room, whispered to me in thrilling voices that I could understand, although they were unheard. I felt as if I were going mad. I cannot tell now the horrible thoughts that crossed my brain. Presently a strange impression forced itself upon my labouring consciousness. I became aware that my mind was being drawn, slowly, irresistibly, away from myself, as it were, towards the wooden box that still lay upon the table—the box that contained Almirez' gift. It was no ordinary effort of my volition, but something subtle, mysterious, inexpressible. I seemed to be moving under the spell of some awful fascination, that attracted me, in spite of my own conscious aversion, as the bird is drawn towards the serpent's coils. I drew nearer to the table. I opened the box and took out the golden figure. For an instant I experienced a great sense of relief; then, with a sickening revulsion, the seething wave of delirium poured back into my brain. The glittering figure seemed to swell enormously in size; its deep-set eyes glowed like living embers; the sun on its flank scintillated with a thousand dancing lights. As I watched, dumbly, mechanically, I saw the human face that was carven within the sun gather to itself intelligence and expression. An angry frown settled on its brow. I could even fancy that the features moved. Pitiable, horrible as my condition had been before, it was worse now. At last I could bear the horror of it no longer. A wild desire to rid myself of the hateful image came over me. Without pausing for thought or reasoning, with only a frantic effort of the will that seemed to burst the bonds of the spell that held me, I snatched up the figure, thrust it back into the box, and hurried upstairs to Almirez' room. The room was in darkness. Hastily I set down the box on the corner of the table nearest to the door, and fled away down the stairs, as if an evil spirit was behind me.

When I got back to my own room it was just past nine o'clock. The fact that I was sufficiently master of my senses to look at the clock and gather the time from it somewhat reassured me. As a matter of fact, I felt greatly relieved by the strange thing that I had done. Now that I had made that supreme effort of my will, now that the box and its contents had been removed elsewhere, the room itself seemed less sombre, the air seemed less stifling, the voices ceased to ring in my ears. I sat down to argue with myself—a little nervously at first, it must be confessed—on the subject of these ridiculous fancies of mine. The longer I argued, the more I became convinced of their absurdity. I even laughed drowsily to myself in sheer pity for my own weakness. A delicious sensation of restfulness, of relief, of relaxation after extreme tension, stole through my limbs and overpowered me. Gradually I yielded myself up to sleep, and slept with all the soundness of utter exhaustion.

The first sound that I was conscious of was the rattle of a latchkey in the street-door. I heard it dimly in the midst of my dreams, and knew that Almirez had come home. He let himself in very quietly, closed the street-door after him, and advanced with noiseless steps down the passage. I was conscious that he stood awhile outside the door of my room—how long he waited, whether for minutes or only seconds, I cannot say—and I could hear the sound of his steady breathing close against the panels. Then he turned back again and began to mount the stairs. Up to this time I was still but half awake; and it was as the incidents in a dream, rather than as the product of my waking senses, that I was conscious of what I have just related. The shutting of Almirez' door on the floor above first roused me to actual wakefulness. It was some seconds later still before I began to consider how extraordinary, how ungrateful, how utterly inexplicable he would consider my conduct in returning his gift as I had done without a word of explanation. Grudgingly—for my limbs were stiff and my eyes heavy with sleep—I rose from my chair and prepared to go up-stairs. What should I say to him? How should I account for my ridiculous behaviour? I hesitated. Why not postpone the explanation until the morning, when my wits would be more active and I should have had more time for consideration? I looked at the clock. It was within a few minutes of midnight. That decided me. Almirez was probably as tired as I was. He might never notice the box upon the table. At any rate I would not do anything that night. And so, with the drowsiness still heavy upon me, I tumbled into bed and slept until the morning.

I have often wondered since, with a strange, sinking horror, what might have happened then, what sight might have met my eyes, had I obeyed my first impulse to follow Almirez to his room.

I was aroused, when the white light of the spring morning was already streaming into my room, by a rapid knocking at the door. Mrs Placer wanted to see me. Immediate, if I pleased. There was a tremble in her voice, an urgent haste telling of some unusual agitation, that made my dressing a very rapid matter. When I emerged from my room, Mrs Placer was standing close to the door with a scared-looking face.

'If you please, sir,' she began very rapidly, 'I'm afraid as Mr Almirez have been took ill sudden. Leastways, there's something wrong with him. His bed have not been slep in; for, him not answering when I knocked him up, I made so bold as just to look in. And, sir, if you please, when I peeped into his sitting-room, there was him sitting in a chair and looking that queer, sir, you can't think; and never turned his head, though I spoke to him. I got frightened, sir, to see him so, and thought I'd run down to you; and, if you please, sir, would you mind just stepping up to see if there's anything the matter with the poor gentleman?'

Telling Mrs Placer to go for a doctor, I ran up the staircase. I had an awful, undefined misgiving that told me something had happened. What it was I dared not ask myself; but I *knew.*

The room up-stairs was still dark; for the curtains were drawn across the windows, as they had been left the night before, and the daylight only crept through the gaps in thin, glimmering streaks that fell along the carpet. Keeping my face steadily turned away from something that lay in a chair beside the table, I walked across the room and drew back one of the heavy curtains with a rattle. The light poured into the darkened room, and I turned round.

Almirez was lying back in the chair, his arms hanging limply from the shoulders. A hideous dark flush suffused his brow; his cheeks were puffed and livid. The smile—the constant, graceful smile, that seemed part of his identity—was gone at last, banished by the stern rigidity of death. His purple, swollen lips were drawn back tightly over the shining teeth, the teeth themselves slightly gaping in the ghastly semblance of a laugh. His wide-open eyes, with all the look of concentrated horror that was conveyed by the unnaturally dilated pupils, were staring sightlessly at a little wooden box that was upon the table beside him—the box that still contained the figure of the golden llama—its lid removed and the paper wrappings scattered over the table.

Beside the box stood a stoppered bottle labelled Chloroform; and a shattered glass was lying on the floor beneath the chair, where it had fallen from the nerveless fingers of the dead man.

LITERARY RESEARCH ROOM AT SOMERSET HOUSE.

It seems to have been a much-cherished maxim with our forefathers that nobody was worth considering unless he could pay for consideration, and that it was far more important that one man invested with a little brief authority should make a small income out of some one or other public storehouse of information, than that its treasures should be open freely to all who wished to study their contents. The same spirit of thought which formerly permitted the verger of Westminster Abbey to exclude all visitors from the fane unless they would pay a fixed entrance-money, operated up to the middle of the present century to shut up the vast collection of wills which had accumulated year by year at Somerset House against all except those who were wealthy enough to pay a fee on every document that they examined. Under these circumstances, a general survey of the testamentary dispositions of any period, for the purpose of tracing out developments of law, social economy, or family history, was only possible at great expense; and students are rarely wealthy. The result was that the large and unequalled collection of wills, extending over three centuries, and full of every kind of curious and interesting information, was practically of no avail at all for historical or antiquarian purposes, and seemed to be maintained only in order that a few fortune-hunters might be able to ascertain the value of some particular fair one's dowry, and that a limited harvest of fees might accrue in consequence. The absurdity and injustice of this system did not prevent its continuing down to the year 1862, when in reply to repeated appeals and remonstrances on the part of many savants of distinction, the authorities determined to take some steps in a better way. In this they were hampered by a dislike to abandon the fee-system altogether. Some day perhaps, in a more enlightened age, it will be recognised that great national collections of this kind should not be used as a source of revenue, but should be opened freely to all classes regardless of their ability to pay. In the meantime the authorities certainly made a great advance when, to use their own somewhat high-flown language, they 'created the new Department of Literary Research at the Principal Probate Registry at Somerset House.'

Reduced to prose, this meant that they opened a small reading-room in the basement of the river-frontage of Somerset House, which would accommodate some six students at a time; and here those who were persevering enough to obtain admission were allowed to pursue their researches without any charge. As it was found that the number of applicants greatly exceeded the accommodation provided, the authorities went further, and opened another room which adjoined the first, and the result is that at the present time some sixteen students can be accommodated with sitting-room and sufficient space for their books, papers, and registers, to enable them to pursue their researches without crowding one another. Experience, moreover, shows that if the authorities could see their way to opening another apartment of dimensions equal to the two first put together, there would be no difficulty in filling it.

It must not be imagined from this that any one can simply march into the Literary Research Room as if it were a Free Library. A great deal of formality has to be carried out first of all. By way of beginning, the applicant addresses a formal note to the 'President of the Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty Division of the High Court of Judicature' at 'the Principal Probate Registry, Somerset House, W.C.,' in which he gives a full account of himself, stating his name, address, profession, the object for which he wishes to undertake his researches, and the length of time which he thinks they will extend over. With regard to time, it is as well to be moderate in your estimate, because it is easy to get your order renewed if you wish it. With regard to the object of research, it should be of a literary, antiquarian, or historical character. It will be shown later that investigations with regard to recent dispositions of property cannot be pursued in the Literary Research Room, and that by no amount of ingenuity can this rule be evaded. Perhaps it is the complete certainty of mere disappointment awaiting the impostor that renders the authorities so easy-going with regard to other matters, and induces them to accept the statements of the applicant with regard to himself without further inquiry. The train of reasoning is no doubt something after the following line: 'X—— (the applicant) says that he is a Master of Arts of Y—— University, and wishes to make researches for a literary purpose. If this is true, X—— is obviously a fit and proper person to be admitted. If it is not true, X—— will find out at once that he has made a mistake, and the Literary Research Room will not be troubled with him again.' Anyhow, the result of such an application is usually the receipt by return of post of a ticket signed 'Francis Jeune,' and directing the admission of X—— to the 'Department of Literary Inquiry' for a certain period.

The next step is to go down to the Literary Research Room, carefully taking the ticket with you, in order to make 'an appointment' with the Superintendent—that is, to fix a date at which to begin your researches. It must be thoroughly understood that you cannot walk in any day with the certainty of finding a seat, as you can at the British Museum. The accommodation at Somerset House is far too limited for that, and the number of students is too large in proportion. Applicants have therefore to be taken in turn on different days, and a book is kept in which the Superintendent enters the names just as the secretary of a lawn-tennis club does for his courts. If the list is crowded, you may have to wait for a week or more; but you may rest assured of your day, when once it has been allotted to you; and, moreover, the Superintendent will always book you for several days running, so that there may be some continuity in your work.

The Literary Research Room lies in the south block of the great Quadrangle. You enter by a door in the south-east angle, and then descend a flight of stone stairs. The room lies to the south of the passage, and as there are no directions to help you, the simplest plan is to listen for voices and proceed in that quarter.

The two rooms open into each other, and are practically one, though the division is distinctly defined. The windows look out on a deep area some way below the level of the Embankment. The result is that the rooms are by no means well lighted at any time, and on gray days there is very little chance of being able to see to any purpose, unless you are lucky enough to have secured a seat at a window. The choice of seats, by-the-bye, rests with the first-comers, so there is a decided advantage in being early. Of course, if it is foggy, these underground rooms are plunged in darkness, and the result is an illumination of flaring gas-jets, which blaze high up overhead without any alleviation of a globe or concentration by a reflector. The work of reading page after page of the queer and clumsy writing known as 'legal fist' without the help of a single stop or break, by the light of a naked gas-jet poised high in the air, is about the most trying exercise for the eyes that has yet been invented. The method of warming the rooms is, moreover, of an exceedingly primitive character. In the winter, a large fire is lighted in the inner apartment and bountifully supplied with coal, until it sometimes happens that the temperature becomes too warm, even when there is a frost outside.

The outer room, however, is beyond the radius of heat, and is, moreover, exposed to constant inrushes of cold air from the stone corridor without, whenever the door is opened, which, owing to the irregular arrivals and departures of students and officers, is usually pretty often. The result is that on frosty days the students in the outer room live in an arctic region, from which they occasionally fly into the inner room in order to warm their cold fingers and shivering frames at the fire. A system which condemns men to pursue researches of an arduous character under conditions such as these can scarcely be regarded as perfect. When one considers what might be effected by the introduction of a stove into each room in the place of the one fire, and by the lowering of the gas-jets and providing them with the ordinary protection and reflection in use in almost every office, it is a source of wonder that, after so many years of experience of the defects of the existing methods, it should not have occurred to the Superintendent or his assistants that almost any change would be for the better. The fact is, however, that these officials have no chance of realising the discomforts to which the students are exposed. The officer in charge of the room sits in a corner to the left of the fire, and he is not occupied in deciphering antiquated legal writing against time.

It is impossible, however, to speak too highly of the personal conduct of the officers themselves. The utmost courtesy, the greatest readiness to help or advise, are extended freely. All preliminary difficulties arising from the ignorance or inexperience of the intending student are swept away in a few minutes by the practised care which the Superintendent bestows on his beginners, and the assiduity with which he instructs them in the rules, which must be observed rigidly by all.

The old law which struck at the very existence of a student was that the use of ink was absolutely forbidden. A change has been effected on that point. It is not, however, permitted to make any tracing from any document, or to use the leaves of the registers or calendars as a support for the paper whereon you write your notes. If you violate this rule, you will be requested to withdraw at once, and your ticket of admission will be cancelled. The object of this regulation is to prevent any injury to the registers.

The general rule with regard to hours is that the rooms are open from 10 in the morning to 3.30 in the afternoon—except on Saturday, when they close at 1.30. In the long vacation, however, the hours are shorter. When a name is entered for a particular day, the owner is entitled to the whole working-day, and can arrive and depart when he chooses. The practice of dividing a day by allotting so many hours to several students is not recognised.

The rooms are furnished with a number of heavy, old-fashioned wooden desk-tables and cane-bottomed chairs to match. In a corner by the fire there is a flat table for the Superintendent. Over the mantelpiece hangs a list of the calendars and registers which it is permissible to consult free of any fees in this department. The list ends with the calendar of a century ago, that is to say, of the year 1795. The calendars and registers which have accumulated since that date cannot be brought to the Literary Research Room at all. This is the reason why there is very little fear of misuse of the privileges of a student.

The majority of the calendars—that is, the annual alphabetical lists of testators—will be found on the shelves in the Research Room, and can be taken down by the students themselves. A certain limited number of them, however, are not there, and the student who requires one of these will have to make out a written demand for it on a printed form, which he will deliver to a messenger, who in due course will bring the desired volume. When by the help of the calendars you have discovered the date of a particular will, it is necessary to make out a ticket of request for the register, and after a short delay the messenger will bring in a great heavy book, bound in rough leather and clamped with iron, which is carried by a thick loop of leather attached to the sides. Two of these volumes form a good load for one man. They are the registers, and contain registered copies of the original wills. The latter are never produced, and students have to be content with the copies, which are, however, perfectly authentic, and much easier to read than the originals. The bulk of these registers are stored in a series of rooms in the basement on the same level as the Research Room, and it is interesting to observe that these rooms are protected only by very ordinary doors, which are often left open. There is, in fact, no danger of robbery. The property is of no value except to an antiquary, and the enormous weight and singular appearance of it remove all hope of getting it through the Quadrangle, to say nothing of the gateway, without attracting observation. By way of a useful precaution, however, against the carelessness or selfishness of students, it is provided that no one shall have more than two registers at a time, or more than eight in a day.

At the close of the working-day, the Superintendent rises and observes, 'Closing-time, gentlemen!' and the sitting comes to an end. It is requested, however, that every student will sign his name in the book at each sitting before he goes away, in order that the authorities may be able to judge to what extent the privileges granted by them are appreciated and used. Perhaps after another twenty years or so they will realise that the appreciation is sufficiently great to warrant an addition to the accommodation, and an improvement in the arrangements for giving light and warmth.

A TRANSACTION IN GOVERNMENT PAPER.

BY W. FORBES MITCHELL,
Author of *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny.*

In a previous article on 'Hidden Treasure in India,' reference was made to the practice of natives gambling in Government paper. The wealthy banker, Lalla Muttra Pershand, of Lahore, is again responsible for the following story, which he considered an excellent joke, and a smart piece of financial skill. 'Do you remember some years ago,' he asked, 'just after the withdrawal of the troops from Afghanistan, there was a great financial commotion in Calcutta, and Government paper went up all at once from about 98 to over seven per cent. premium, whilst the paper markets of Bombay and Madras remained steady?

'Just after the last Afghan war, money business was very dull, and certain Marwarees who shall be nameless, finding ordinary speculations flat, stale, and unprofitable, hit upon a little plan of causing some excitement in the Calcutta money market, and at the same time making a few lakhs for themselves. The first act of the play was the arrival in Calcutta of a very respectable-looking elderly native gentleman, with letters of introduction to several native bankers—all forged, of course. This gentleman called himself Lalla Muthra Dass; he was accompanied by two servants and a Marwaree clerk, and he hired a temporary office in Sootaputty, and sent for a leading stockbroker, whom he informed that he had come to Calcutta as the representative of certain wealthy bankers in Upper India, who required several lakhs of Government paper for delivery about sixty days after date. But the purchases were to be made very quietly, and on no account would any purchase be confirmed if made above par; his employers being careful men, would not, under any pretence whatever, confirm any purchase above par.

'As Government paper was then at about two per cent. discount, with a downward tendency, the employers of Muthra Dass, being liberal men, although strict in business, had given him power to share half the discount of each purchase with the brokers, in addition to liberal brokerage. So purchases went on for delivery by a certain date calculated sixty days after the arrival of Muthra Dass, and the market still remained flat with a downward tendency, with many reports getting abroad, no one knowing from what source, that still further depressed Government paper. Muthra Dass haggled over every purchase with an upward tendency of even one-sixteenth per cent., but finally closed and clenched the bargain. This went on for over a month. About twenty days before the date of taking delivery, Muthra Dass received a confidential letter from his employers, which, after due deliberation and under the promise of the utmost secrecy, he showed to his Bengalee clerk, whom he had engaged on the recommendation of one of the leading native stockbrokers in Calcutta. The purport of this confidential letter was to expedite purchases and arrange for taking delivery, if possible, before the fixed date; if that could be done, the money would be sent at once to pay for the paper. The reason assigned for these instructions was that the Government had got to know of a very large hoard of money concealed by the Nawab of Rampore, amounting, as report had it, to about twenty or thirty crores, and the Nawab had been ordered to invest the whole of this hitherto concealed hoard in Government paper at once, the interest of which was to be retained to meet the pay of the Nawab's Imperial Contingent to the army, and that such a demand for Government paper being made on the market would at once raise the price to a high premium. Shortly after being entrusted with this confidential information, the Bengalee clerk was, of course, taken suddenly ill, and had to get leave to go home, which was graciously granted, only he was cautioned once again before leaving to observe the utmost secrecy. But before he had left the office of Muthra Dass many hours, the money market was rising, and many brokers were purchasing for other buyers. The following day Muthra Dass received an urgent telegram that the Treasurer of the Nawab had left by mail-train for Calcutta with instructions to purchase Government paper to the extent of twenty-five crores, or two thousand five hundred lakhs, no matter at what premium; and should this become known in the Calcutta market, the Lalla must report hourly to his employers should paper go above par. This telegram was also shown, in the strictest confidence, of course, to the Bengalee clerk, who again became indisposed, and again got leave to go home; and in a few hours the paper market was once more rising by leaps and bounds.

'The next morning an up-country man arrived by mail-train with letters to certain bankers, informing them that he was the servant of the Treasurer of Rampore, sent on in advance to hire an office and dwelling-house for two months for the Treasurer, who was on his way to Calcutta on most important business connected with the Rampore State. A large house was at once hired for two months, and one month's rent paid in advance. Carpets and pillows were arranged for, with writing desks for native clerks; and a first-class carriage and pair was hired by the month from one of the livery stables for the Treasurer of his Highness of Rampore, to be in waiting at the railway station for the arrival of the mail-train the following day, with several ticca gharries for servants.

'The mail-train arrived as usual, and, sure enough, there was the Treasurer in a first-class carriage reserved for himself, and a second-class for his servants. Many stockbrokers and others had turned out to see his arrival; and he was driven to the house hired for him with all the pomp of silver chobdars, &c., running in front of his carriage. That day he rested, but drove out in the evening to hear the band, and to see the sights of Calcutta, having previously given notice that he wished to see certain stockbrokers the following day. By this time Government paper was at a considerable premium, and many brokers were pressing on Muthra Dass to cancel purchases, which he resolutely refused to do without instructions from his masters. When the stockbrokers next day interviewed the Treasurer of the Nawab they were surprised at his liberality. There he was, seated amongst silken pillows, and smoking a jewelled hookah; seven or even ten per cent. premium was nothing to him; he was ordered to purchase, and purchase he must. His master was a hot-headed young man, who was anxious to stand well with the Government, and so forth. He, the Treasurer, had telegraphed suggesting delay, seeing the state of the market; but the reply was to purchase; so what could he do? The upshot was that the Treasurer of Rampore engaged certain brokers to purchase Government paper, arranging to take delivery as the hoarded money would arrive in Calcutta and be made over to the Mint, because much of it was either in bullion or in ancient coins, which would have to be re-coined. The Treasurer, however, although very liberal on the part of his master, was very strict about a private dustoorie for himself, which had to be paid before any purchase was settled.

'By this time Lalla Muthra Dass had also got telegrams asking his advice as to the advisability of selling all his purchases at a premium for ready cash, rather than take delivery. This, after due deliberation and consultation with his brokers, he advised; and a return telegram directed him to re-sell and secure the difference. When totalled up, it was found that the Lalla's purchases amounted to over two and a half crores. But there was no difficulty in selling at a handsome profit; and as the Lalla's masters were liberal men, he treated the brokers liberally, and the whole of his purchases were sold out before the evening of the following day, and the difference, amounting to over ten lakhs, was paid to the Lalla, who then quietly retired from the stage, purposing to return after the market should fall again to favourable rates for investing. Meanwhile, brokers were purchasing on account of the Treasurer without limit, and so long as his private commission was paid, he confirmed every purchase.

'At length he gave out that prudence compelled him to cease purchasing till the first instalment of the treasure, which was on its way to Calcutta, should arrive, and be taken over by the Mint, and at the same time he received a telegram that the first instalment had passed through Lucknow by special train, and might be expected in Howrah by a certain date. He issued orders to arrange for carts to take delivery; and a certain number of men to assist the guards who were coming from Rampore with the treasure, to escort the carts from the railway station to the Mint, and he had several times visited the Mint himself, and was supposed to have arranged for everything. The next day was a native holiday, and the Bengalee clerks got leave, all except one, who remained to attend to any urgent business. During the day the Treasurer received an urgent telegram informing him that the 'special' bringing the treasure from Rampore had missed the E. I. Railway down mail at Mogul Serai, and would be delayed there for twenty-four hours; the Bengalee clerk was sent to countermand the carts for the railway station till further notice, and the Treasurer sent for his carriage for the purpose of visiting a friend. Telling the Bengalee clerk to attend office next day to open any telegrams, and if they required immediate attention, to send them on to a certain address, the Treasurer of Rampore, with his silver chobdars and his jewelled hookah, took his departure in his hired carriage, leaving instructions with the *durwan* to open the office as usual for the Bengalee clerks the next day. He then drove him with his private secretary to Kalighát, where he dismissed the coachman with instructions to be in attendance at his lodging the following night for his afternoon airing. So the Treasurer of Rampore disappeared at Kalighât—not to reappear in Calcutta to this day. But many a Bengalee, Armenian, European, and Israelitish speculator in Government paper has good reason to remember Lalla Muthra Dass and the Treasurer of Rampore!'

Such was the story told to me by Lalla Chowringhee Lall, and he evidently considered the whole an excellent joke, and that Government paper was invented for transactions of this kind.

CONVERSATIONAL QUOTATIONS.

By CHARLES HUSSEY.

THERE is an old, a very old, tale told of a venerable lady who, after seeing the play of *Hamlet* for the first time, said: 'It is a very good play, as plays go, but it is made up of quotations.' This good dame, although she was probably unaware of it, was acknowledging, in a roundabout way perhaps, the indebtedness of our language to our national bard; phrases, sentences, and sometimes whole lines from his writings, have been crystallised, as it were, into colloquial English, and there are probably more quotations drawn from the works of Shakespeare than from those of any other author, ancient or modern.

It is not, however, with quotations which are used *as* quotations, and are consequently dignified with inverted commas, that we propose to deal, but rather with some of those phrases which by constant use have become incorporated in our mother-tongue, whose origin some of us might not be able to indicate offhand, or which by popular error have been wrongly assigned to this or that writer. For instance, Sam Weller (*Pickwick Papers*) did *not* originate the expression 'wheels within wheels,' as many suppose; he used it, truly, but the idea is from the Bible (Ezekiel, x. 10). Another Biblical expression, which would hardly be recognised as such at first sight, is 'the skin of my teeth' (Job, xix. 20). We are indebted to Cervantes for the proverb 'Honesty is the best policy' (*Don Quixote*, part ii., chapter 33), while the familiar phrase 'Diamond cut diamond'* is due to Ford, the author of *The Lover's Melancholy* (Act I., scene i.). Although Sheridan's well-known character Mrs Malaprop did 'own the soft impeachment' (*The Rivals*, Act V., scene iii.), we must credit Shakespeare with the origin of the saying that 'comparisons are odorous' (so frequently attributed to that estimable lady), as he puts these words in the mouth of Dogberry (*Much Ado About Nothing*, Act III., scene v.). Ben Jonson (*Tale of a Tub*, Act IV., scene iii.) and Butler (*Hudibras*, Part I., canto i., line 821) both 'smell a rat;' and to Tusser, the author of *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*, the truism 'Better late than never' is due. The great Napoleon may sneeringly have called us a 'nation of shopkeepers' (*une nation boutiquière*), and have expressed the opinion that 'Providence is on the side of the big battalions;' but the first is borrowed from Adam Smith (*Wealth of Nations*, vol ii., published in 1775, when Napoleon was a child), and the second is a plagiarism from Voltaire's letter to M. le Riche, dated February 6, 1770 ('Dieu est toujours pour les gros bataillons'). 'Though I say it as shouldn't' is used in slightly altered form by Beaumont and Fletcher, and afterwards quoted by Colley Cibber and Fielding. King Charles II. was of opinion that a parliamentary debate in his time was 'as good as a play.' (It would be interesting to know what his merry Majesty would think of our legislators of to-day.) For 'murder will out' we must turn to Geoffrey Chaucer, who in his quaint spelling tells us 'Mordre wol out' (*The Nonnes Preestes Tale*, line 15058). When we say we will 'leave no stone unturned,' we are quoting the answer of the Delphic oracle to the inquiry of Polycrates as to the best means of discovering the treasure buried on the field of Platæa by Mardonius. To 'make a virtue of necessity' is from Chaucer (*Knightes Tale*, line 3044), but the phrase is used also by Rabelais, Shakespeare, and Dryden.

Few people, and surely no Scotsmen, will require to be reminded that Burns is responsible for 'Durance vile' and 'Some wee short hour ayont the twal,' or fail to acquiesce in his quotation

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* Originally 'Diamonds cut diamonds.'

(from Pope), 'An honest man's the noblest work of God;' but they would less easily recognise Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (Book III., canto i., stanza 17) as the source of 'through thick and thin'—an expression, however, which is to be found in many subsequent writers. Shakespeare and Swift both bid us 'tell the truth and shame the devil;' and a dozen authors—Shakespeare, Spenser, and Chaucer among them—hasten to assure us that 'All that glitters is not gold.' From Byron (a much-quoted author) we learn that 'truth is stranger than fiction' (*Don Juan*, canto xiv., stanza 101), and in the same poem we find 'The tocsin of the soul—the dinner bell' (canto v., stanza 49). 'Procrastination is the thief of time' occurs in Young's *Night Thoughts* (Night I., line 393). 'Fresh woods and pastures new' is Milton's (*Lycidas*, line 193); so also is the phrase 'That old man eloquent,' that has been so frequently applied to Mr Gladstone (*Sonnets*—'To the Lady Margaret Ley'). Shakespeare makes Hostess Quickly say that burly Sir John Falstaff has 'eaten her out of house and home' (*Henry IV.*, *Part II.*, Act II., scene i.), and we have the unimpeachable authority of the same great writer for stating that 'the devil can quote [cite] Scripture for his purpose' (*Merchant of Venice*, Act I., scene iii.). Dryden announces that 'Men are but children of a larger growth' (*All for Love*, Act IV., scene i.), and bids us remember 'Delays are dangerous' (*Tyrannic Love*, Act I., scene i.). 'Over the hills and far away' is to be found in Gay's *Beggar's Opera* (Act I., scene i.); and the song, to whose welcome tune the dinner is ushered in at most naval and military messes, 'Oh! the roast beef of Old England,' is from the pen of Henry Fielding. Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* is perhaps the most frequently quoted short poem in the language; it is like the old lady's *Hamlet*, before referred to—'made up of quotations.' 'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise,' is found in another poem by the same author (*On a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, stanza 10).

'Man wants but little here below, Nor wants that little long,' must be credited to Oliver Goldsmith (*The Hermit*, stanza 8), but the same idea is to be found in Young's *Night Thoughts* (Night IV., line 118). ''Tis distance lends enchantment to the view' was written by Thomas Campbell (*Pleasures of Hope*, part i., line 7), and Keats's *Endymion* contains the oft-quoted line, 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever' (line 1). To find the origin of the phrase 'to turn over a new leaf,' we must refer to Middleton's *Anything for a Quiet Life* (Act III., scene iii.), and the title of this same play, by the way, is a not altogether unfamiliar expression.

Examples such as these might be multiplied almost indefinitely to prove that many of the phrases 'familiar in *our* mouths as household words' (*Henry V.*, Act IV., scene iii.) are of most respectable ancestry, but enough has probably been said to show that in our ordinary conversation we frequently quote (unconsciously perhaps) some of the best writers of times gone by.

We will conclude with a short anecdote anent quotation. Shakespeare has often been credited with knowing everything, and a Shakespearian enthusiast once stated in company that somewhere or other in his writings a quotation could be found suitable for every subject, and for every condition and circumstance of life, and further challenged any one present to name any two subjects for which an appropriate quotation could not be met with. One of his hearers, thinking that probably Shakespeare had never had his photograph taken (would that he had), or sent a sixpenny 'wire,' named photography and the electric telegraph, both essentially children of the nineteenth century. The challenger replied for photography, 'The glorious sun stays in his course and plays the alchemist' (*King John*, Act III., scene i.), and for the electric telegraph, 'I'll put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes' (*Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act II., scene i.). How far these quotations fulfil the conditions laid down, we must leave our readers to judge.

THE SICK MAN'S DREAM.

AND there before me flashed a morning gleam
(It was not like a dream),
A dazzle of light that overflowed the sky
And filled the sea; and I,
A city-toiler fallen in the strife
That I could wage no more,
I seemed the wreck and remnant of a life
The sea had cast ashore.

Oh but to lie upon those sun-kissed sands
With idle, restful hands,
To feel the freshening wind, to hear the sea
Whisper, and call to me,
Was as tho' heaven had dawned on earth at last,
Or I to heaven were brought;
The city here, my life of all the past
Dwindled to but a thought.

There in the streets, I thought, the dull day long
The busy workers throng,
Whilst I . . . The waves broke nearer, and more near,
And still I had no fear;
I yearned to feel the cool, bright waters sweep
Above me, hushed and high:
For, when I gazed, I saw in all the deep
Only another sky.

Then something stirred; or was it you that spoke?
I started, and awoke,
And lo! my hands lay white and wasted yet
On the white coverlet;
And here, about me, still this silent room,
The shaded lamp, the red
Quick fire-flame darting lightnings thro' the gloom—
And you beside my bed.

As stars at dawn, the dreams that fill the dark
Wane when we waken. . . . Hark!
Is it a wind among the garden trees,
That voice so like the sea's?—
Listen! . . . I have not dreamed. Oh restful bliss!
The great sea calls me now. . . .
These are its winds that cool my lips, and this
Its spray upon my brow.

A. ST JOHN ADCOCK.

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IRREPRESSIBLES.

By Mrs Lynn Linton.

Who does not know those irrepressible folk who have no respect for the decencies of self-control, no regard for the more tender restraints of delicacy, no careful hold on that golden treasure of Silence wherein lies Wisdom? As impervious to hints as is that proverbial blind horse to the wink and the nod, they take their headlong way as though they were so many wild asses of the desert, unbitted, unbridled, unguided. Blundering and obtuse, they crash into the secret closets where the family skeletons are housed. Open-mouthed and without thought, they give to the world at large the benefit of their discovery, and drag out into the light of day those grinning atomies which they found comfortably covered up under the dust of a generation, undisturbed and forgotten, till now they have been resurrected and set a-dancing once more in the open. Not so much inquisitive as without foresight or perspicuity, they tear off the pretty little silken bandages deftly fashioned to look like ornament, and come upon the sore they were designed to conceal; which sore, because of the natural hardness of their hands and the clumsiness of their touch, they rasp and rub till the poor sufferer weeps and winces. And all this comes from that want of sympathetic imagination, that denseness of perception, which is characteristic of the tribe, and in no wise from evil-heartedness or bad intention. For these Irrepressibles are often as kind-hearted as they are clumsy; and when they subject their friends to torture, do so with no more malice than there is in the coping-stone when it falls on the head of the passer-by, and smashes him into eternity.

Of the faintest echo of that proverb which forbids one to speak of a hempen rope in the house where a man has been hanged, our irrepressible friends are totally ignorant. Do they know a family whereof some degenerate member has gone wrong—perhaps suffered the penalty due, say, to forgery, embezzlement, fraudulent dealing with trust-money or the like? All in good faith, and quite oblivious of the painful associations connected and aroused, they will go into a minute discussion on the last analogous case, disputing the evidence, descanting on the enormity of the crime, delivering themselves of their opinions as to the punishment due for such an offence—opinions sure to be Draconian in their severity and Rhadamanthine in their inflexibility. In vain a more enlightened friend hints to them to desist. In vain a more nimble wit strives to turn this dangerous flow of talk into safer channels. The Irrepressibles blunder on, like bulls making havoc of the Dresden and the Sèvres, lacerating the hearts they would not willingly have hurt for all the broad lands of England. They see nothing, suspect nothing, have no consciousness of sin and no thought of wrong-doing. When they are trounced by those more understanding ones, and shown the enormity of their blunder, they are all in amazed wonder how they ever got into such a hole. They knew, but they did not remember, they say; and as for the hints and warnings so subtilely conveyed, they understood them no more than the wool-gathering whist-player understands the game when he does not see the call for trumps, or read the significance of a ten played third hand.

The Irrepressibles rush into friendships as into enmities, without solid grounds and on the principle of the pyramid built point downwards. Slaves to their emotions as they are, they give their very souls to the treacherous and unloving, offering their hearts to all the daws about. Unlike the self-centred and egoistic, who have no more spontaneity than an iceberg has of flaming fire, the Irrepressibles are spontaneous from head to heel—thoughts, actions, feelings, all bubbling to the surface like one of those inexhaustible springs which must find an outlet no matter what may oppose. Love at first sight is their constant experience; rash marriage is their general portion; early disgust and life-long consciousness of the mistake they have made follow on the heels of their inconsiderateness; and all the world is then taken into their confidence, and made free of their self-inflicted sufferings. They can no more repress the desire to tell out their woes than they could control the impulses which led to them. The one is but the converse of the other, even as Love's shadow is Hate. As with their troubles within the home, so is it with their enmities, their quarrels, their misunderstandings without. When an Irrepressible is in the midst of a social war, he rushes hot-foot to all his friends and associates, making his own case good—till the other side is heard. That other side generally puts a different complexion on the face of the matter; and perhaps the irate Irrepressible himself is proved in the wrong—shown to be the one to whom is owing the whole germination, growth, flowering, and seeding of the poison-plant. This is sure to be so when he is a dour, susceptible, self-tormenting person, who sees insults where none were meant, and slights in the airiest nothings. For this sullen kind of irrepressibility is as true to life as the more bright and bubbling, the more buoyant and gassy. And when we have dealings with these uneasy-tempered and suspicious Irrepressibles, we have a very fair notion of one of the pains of that Malebolge where sinful souls expiate in torments the crimes committed in the flesh.

Irrepressible are the fond—and foolish—hopes which have no root-work in probability, but which are just possible without miracle, and no more than this. As irrepressible are those equally foolish fears which see dangers where none exist, and destruction in the smallest risk. Certain people, more especially women, go through life in one unending terror of evil dreams and fatal results. When they drive, their horses will run away, lame them for life, and smash the carriage to smithereens. When they walk, every honest old Joe going to and from his work is a footpad with a hedge-stake beneath his rags. When they sit at home, they are always smelling fire and hearing burglars. When they travel by rail, they make more sure of an accident than of safe arrival at their destination. Fear dominates them at all four corners. In the twilight, ghostly visitants pass and waver in the cold gray air; at night, 'airy voices syllable men's names' and call to them from the depths of the unseen world. When the morning breaks, it brings presage of disaster during the day:—and all this misery is as uncontrollable as the laughter of a happy child, as the rain of a tropical sky, as the frost of the icebound north. Governed by their fears, they suffer in their self-made, unsubstantial and non-existent Inferno, just as their brothers and cousins rejoice in the fool's paradise where they have taken up their lodging—paying the rent by their rationality and good sense.

Irrepressible in familiarities, so are these folk in discussion. Nothing stops them when they have a mind to talk, and for no one's opinions have they respect or consideration. At the table of a Home Ruler they will bring forward their strongest Imperialist views; at that of a staunch Conservative they will advocate Home Rule and down with the House of Lords, one man one vote, and a fig for that stake which once represented stability. They talk loudly and they talk lustily. The bated breath and the courteous phrase have no place in their controversial armoury. Had they more reticence of manner they must needs have less irrepressibility of nature—again that flame of fire not being the natural product of an iceberg. As with politics, so with religion. An Irrepressible as a religionist is a fanatic pure and simple. A second Peter, he carries the Fiery Cross through dale and hamlet, and on to the tops of the far-reaching hills; or, as Jenny Geddes, he flings his 'creepie stool' at the head of the officiating minister, and blasphemes such doctrines as he may not like. If he does not approve of what he hears, irrepressible and inconsiderate, he lashes out in disdainful contradiction, as if he were the only person whose opinions had to be consulted, and the one whose inalienable possession was the Key of Truth. Whatever is different from his creed is wrong, and whatever he thinks wrong he attacks. His acquaintance is an embarrassment at all times, but never so much so as when he seeks to convert and to controvert, to proselytise and to turn from the error of their pernicious ways those who have been born and bred in their present faith, and those who have thought out the matter from end to end and stand where they do by force of reasoned conviction. The Irrepressibles reck little of these reasoned convictions. Their sole desire is to press their own views, no matter at what cost or through whose pain; and when they have made some angry, others perplexed, and all uncomfortable, they think they have done their duty and deserved well of their generation. What a weariness to the flesh are these irrepressible proselytisers when met with, say in a hotel, or at a friend's house, where you cannot easily escape! Are they Nonconformists, and is there a Romanist among them? Never do they let the sins and errors of the Elder Church fall into oblivion for want of routing out and setting in array, like so many coco-nuts to be knocked down by a skilful hand. Are they Romanists in the midst of Protestants? Then do they insist on the claims of Authority, Tradition, Succession, denying the validity of all Orders outside their own pale, and refusing to the poor shivering souls before them so much as a shred of the wedding garment. So with all the rest—that wise liberality which allows to others the freedom and sanctity of conscience it takes for itself having no place in the Irrepressible's repertory of virtues.

The Irrepressibles have no delicacy. We may take that as an axiom proved and sure. If your nearest and dearest have offended their susceptibilities, they will abuse them to your face with unstinted measure and unrestricted breadth. In vain your show of displeasure by glacial reserve or warm defence. Your Irrepressible cares nought for either attitude. He is as an elephant crushing down the young saplings—as a hard-headed dunce chastised by a peacock's feather. Full of his own wrongs real or fancied, fevered by that false wrath which comes from personal antipathy, they one and all pound away at that Kit of their present enmity; and no bridle fashioned by man or morality, by good manners or consideration, restrains them in their onslaught. Perhaps the most embarrassing position that a man can be placed in is when one of this blatant, noisy, and intemperate tribe falls foul of a near relation who, by his account, is nothing less than a scoundrel, while he himself is Injured Innocence in person and a spotless victim of perfidy and villainy.

On a line with him, if at a slightly different angle, stand those blunderers whose social mistakes are among the stock chestnuts of anecdotists. 'That fat frowsy woman'—who is your wife; 'that painfully hideous fool'—who is your daughter; your 'fishy-eyed' husband; your 'goat-like' father. Who does not know the whole roll-call of social enormities committed by those headlong Irrepressibles who neither read faces nor understand accents? Indeed, they understand nothing of all which others take as their guiding principles through life. They have no perception of the true shape or colour of the circumstances in the midst of which they stand, no prevision of consequences, no thought of the future. Not looking before they leap, with shut eyes, and all unconscious where they are going or what they shall find on the other side, they take the jump, and plunge into that caldron of boiling water standing ready for them, or into the social analogue of that Serbonian bog 'where armies whole have sunk.' Sometimes, indeed, they suffer a punishment so severe as to prove their virtual redemption. For like the child who has burnt itself, and thus learns not to play again with fire, so do the Irrepressibles at last learn a little caution and some reserve. An action for libel, for instance, is a famous bridle for unruly impulses—as good as the old 'branks' which tamed the ancient scold. And when our Irrepressibles not only lose friends and lovers, offend relations, and are cut out of wills because of their indiscreet utterances, but also have to stand in the defendant's place in court, be severely lectured by the judge and cast in damages besides, then maybe they 'tak' a thocht and mend,' to which a worse creature than they was once so powerfully entreated.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XXIII.—BRANT STRIKES FIRST BLOW.

'HAH! that's right, boy; glad you've come,' cried the doctor one evening. 'Sit down. Tell me how things are going. You look tired as a dog.'

'I am, sir.'

'Then take a glass of that Burgundy. It will put life into you. By the way, I called at South Audley Street.'

'Indeed? How was Miss Bryne?'

'Bad: very bad indeed.'

'Ill? I am very sorry,' said Wynyan.

'Terribly bad. Her old complaint: Endoza, sir,' said the doctor grimly. 'Well, don't you want to know how any one else is?'

'No,' said Wynyan coldly.

'More fool you. But I say, my boy, what the dickens have you been about there?'

'Nothing, sir, but behaved like a weak idiot. Come, you wanted to know about the business.'

'So I do, directly, But look here: you must have said or done something to upset little Rénée.'

'I have been hard at work night and day,' said Wynyan, affecting not to follow his friend's words.

'I was talking about South Audley, not about George Street, sir. You must have given her some terrible offence.'

'I kept the men at work two whole nights,' continued Wynyan.

'I introduced your name three times over; and, by George, sir, she nearly snapped my head off,' said the doctor.

'And in another fortnight, doctor, I shall have something to show the government which will keep them quiet for a time.'

'I said that you were my friend, and I should mention your name as often as I liked.'

'And then it will give me an opportunity to get matters more ahead.'

'I never thought that she had so much firmness in her. Look here, Wynyan, my boy, what have you done?'

'And by taking on a couple of dozen extra hands, we may recover a good deal of lost ground.'

'It must have been something that turned her dead against you, my boy, for she finished at last with her face flaming, and by telling me that she must request me to cease my visits.'

'How could you be so foolish, doctor?' cried Wynyan angrily. 'I must beg that you will not meddle in my affairs if you desire that we should remain friends.'

'Humph! Between the two stools, et cetera.'

'Keep to your medicine, sir,' said Wynyan, with his eyes flashing, 'or to your own love affairs.'

'Thank you, my boy, thank you. Go on. Only remember that the moral influences the physical a great deal. All right: I'm not offended.'

'No, sir, but I am,' said Wynyan hotly; 'and I wish you good-evening.'

He strode out of the room, there was a faint sound of rustling in the umbrella-stand, and directly after the heavy closing of the door.

'Why, hang him! he has actually gone!' cried the doctor, who had sat listening: and springing to his feet, he rushed into the hall shouting 'Here, hi! Wynyan! Don't be a fool. Come back.' But he was too late. Wynan had gone, jumped into the first cab, and ordered the man to drive him home.

'Bah! It's a stupid thing this love,' growled the doctor, as he returned to his chair. 'Makes people as disagreeable as children getting over the measles.'

He poured out a glass of wine, sipped, spat it out, and set the glass down.

'Bah! Corked!' he exclaimed, and he threw

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his half-smoked cigar into the fire. 'I've a good mind to devote the rest of my days to invention. Why not a medicine—patent medicine with the government stamp? Drops to be taken at the first symptoms of a love-fit coming on. Consequence, utter forgetfulness and indifference. That would be the thing. Well, I think I'll go to bed.'

But Paul Wynyan did not go to bed for some hours. He sat up thinking, trying hard to come to the conclusion that nature delighted in making her worst poisons the most pleasing to the eye, and asking himself why it was that, knowing what he did, he should still suffer cruelly and think of Rénée as she was in the past.

The consequence was that he was dull and heavy when he called in at the office next morning on his way to the works, and waited for about half an hour to see Brant and report the progress at the factory.

But Brant had not arrived at half-past ten, and after a few words with Hamber, who was eager to know how things were going, he went on to the works, saying that he would be back at two, and wanted to see Mr Brant Dalton.

Punctual to the minute, he was back in high spirits, for the men were making excellent progress, and, wrapped up as he was now in the interest of the work, he felt more cheerful; and, telling himself that work was after all the best cure for a mind diseased, and that he must find satisfaction and rest in carrying out the wishes of his old friend, he hurried upstairs to go and see Brant in a more friendly spirit than had existed in his breast for some time past.

On reaching the room, he noticed that the clerks were whispering together and that Hamber was not in his place: but his coming had the effect of setting every one busy again, and he addressed the junior.

'Mr Brant Dalton returned, Gibbs?' he said.

'Yes, sir. Mr Hamber is with him.'

'Something wrong,' thought Wynyan, impressed by the young man's manner; and after a moment's hesitation he went to the principal's room.

'Are you engaged—can you see me?' he asked.

'Oh yes, come in, Mr Wynyan,' cried Brant hurriedly. 'No, don't go, Hamber: you had better stay.'

Wynyan looked from one to the other sharply after closing the door, to read blank despair in Hamber's countenance, and a peculiar troubled nervous expression in Brant's.

'What is it?' said Wynyan. 'Something wrong?' And the first thing which occurred to him as he recalled the hurried gossiping of the clerks and draughtsmen, was that some defalcation had been discovered.

'Wrong? Yes!' cried Brant, after a gasp. 'Here, read this.'

He handed a great official-looking envelope to him; and as he took it Wynyan saw that it bore a government seal.

'Oh, don't you be uneasy about that,' he cried; and there was exultation in his tones. 'I came to talk it over with you.'

'Ah, then you knew?' cried Brant excitedly; and old Hamber caught at the back of a chair to support himself.

'Knew? Of course they had good reason to complain, but I can soon silence them now.'

'You hear, Hamber,' said Brant hoarsely. 'He says he knew all about it.'

'Of course,' cried Wynyan; 'and I tell you I am ready now to show their committee enough to satisfy them of our *bona fides*, and let them see that in a very short time longer we shall have made up for lost time.'

'You—you had better read this communication, Mr Wynyan,' said Brant huskily, but trying to speak in a cold formal tone.

'Certainly,' said Wynyan; and he drew out a brief document bearing an official stamp, read a few lines, started violently, and then looked from one to the other, seeing Brant gazing significantly at the old clerk, who was now ghastly and trembling violently.

'Great Heavens!' gasped Wynyan; 'what does this mean?'

'Have you read all, Mr Wynyan;' said Brant coldly.

'No, not yet. There was matter enough to stun in the first lines.'

'Yes,' said Brant; 'matter enough to stun. Go on, sir, please.'

Wynyan read to the end—it did not take long, and then folded the paper, replaced it slowly in the envelope, and stood with his eyes flashing and brow contracted, tapping his left hand with the edge of the document.

'Their lordships request an immediate explanation,' said Wynyan, quoting from the missive.

'Yes; an immediate explanation, Mr Wynyan. You read—the plans and drawings have been copied, stolen, and sold to some foreign government, ruining the invention and exposing the firm to a dishonourable charge, and immediate demand for a restitution of the heavy sum paid down, and goodness knows what beside.'

'Perhaps a prosecution for swindling—getting money under false pretences,' said Wynyan bitterly.

'There—there must be some mistake, gentlemen,' said Hamber feebly.

'Mistake!' roared Brant. 'Mistake: does that look like a mistake. Curse the invention! I wish I had never heard it named. My poor uncle must have been mad.'

'Leave your uncle's name out of this discussion, sir, if you please,' said Wynyan sternly.

'No, sir, it cannot be left out of this business,' cried Brant excitedly. 'Do you grasp, Mr Wynyan, what this means?'

'I do, sir, fully. The government would not make such a charge without good grounds. It means ruin and disgrace.'

'Worse, sir!' cried Brant.

'Stop a moment,' said Wynyan; and he walked back to see that both doors were closed. 'It will be time enough for the whole world to know when it gets in the papers—if it is not already on its way to their offices. Now, if you please. You were saying that it is worse. There is no worse thing could happen to us than ruin and dishonour, for death would be a relief.'

'I say, sir,' cried Brant, who had wound himself up to speak; 'and I will say it in spite of your interruptions and evasions'——

Wynyan started, for there was something in his rival's tones which suggested a foul blow.

'I say,' cried Brant, 'do you know what this means, and you try to shift aside my words. It means that we must have a traitor in the camp.'

'Of course,' said Wynyan sternly.

'And that traitor must be Hamber, me, or you.'

'I swear before my Creator, gentlemen, that I am innocent,' cried the old clerk wildly. 'Oh, Mr Wynyan, sir, for Heaven's sake, don't you think I would do such a thing.'

Wynyan caught one of the hands extended to him, and clapped his left on the trembling old man's shoulder.

'You, Hamber!' he cried, with a smile. 'You? Hold your tongue, you foolish old man; who could suspect you of such a thing?'

'Then, traitor,' roared Brant furiously, 'it must have been you.'

Wild with indignant fury, Wynyan raised his hand to strike the speaker down, but Hamber clung to him.

'Don't—don't do that, sir,' he cried. 'Mr Wynyan, sir, no one living could believe that lie!'

'Thank you, Hamber,' said Wynyan, calming down as rapidly as he had flashed into rage; and then facing round again, as Brant spoke once more, in a state of wild excitement, his hand to his brow, and as if trying to recall thoughts which were escaping him.

'Ah, I remember now,' he cried. 'What do they say—copied and supplied to a foreign government? Mr Hamber, I call you to bear me witness about those plans.'

'I assure you, sir, I'——

'Listen to what I say,' cried Brant. 'You recollect my words to you when Mr Wynyan brought back those plans after taking them away.'

Wynyan started violently.

'I said to you, "He did not take them away to copy, did he?"'

'I—I—hardly'—— stammered Hamber.

'Answer my question, sir,' roared Brant in the tones of a bullying cross-examining barrister with a losing case.

'Yes, sir; you did say something of the kind,' faltered the old man piteously.—'But, Mr Wynyan, I assured him that such a thing was impossible.'

'Silence!' cried Brant, with a malignant glittering in his eyes. 'That will do, sir. We know now. The case is plain enough. Government may do its worst, for not a step will I stir. Pah! to think we should be brought to this.—Well, sir,' he added sharply, 'is it to be South America or Spain? I should advise you to try one of them while your shoes are good. I don't want to be dragged up as a witness at your trial. What do you mean to do?'

'I shall see,' said Wynyan, looking the scoundrel down; 'that remains to be proved.'

'Of course. It is nothing to me, so long as we are cleared here from the presence of a thief.'

'Thief!'

But once more old Hamber clung to the upraised arm, and Brant had no need to use the poker which he had seized in his defence.

THE STORY OF THE SEWING-MACHINE.

Although the sewing-machine has not put an end to the slavery of the needle, and although 'The Song of the Shirt' may be heard to the accompaniment of its click and whirr, just as it was to the 'stitch, stitch' of Tom Hood's time, yet has it unquestionably come as a boon and a blessing to man—and woman. Its name now is legion, and it has had so many inventors and improvers that the present generation is fast losing sight of its original benefactors. Indeed, we take the sewing-machine to-day as an accomplished fact so familiar as to be commonplace. And yet that fact is a product of as moving a history as any in the story of human invention.

It is the growth of the last half-century, prior to which the real sewing-machine was the heavy-eyed, if not tireless, needlewoman, whose flying fingers seemed ever in vain pursuit of the flying hours. Needlework is as old as human history, for we may see the beginnings of it in the aprons of fig-leaves which Mother Eve sewed. What instrument she used we know not, but we do know from Moses that needles were in use when the tabernacle was built. Yet, strange to say, it was not until the middle of last century that any one tried to supersede manual labour in the matter of stitching. It is said that a German tailor named Charles Frederick Weisenthal was the first to attempt it, but for hand-embroidery only—with a double-pointed needle eyed in the middle. This was in 1755, and fifty years later, one John Duncan, a Glasgow machinist, worked out Weisenthal's idea into a genuine embroidering machine, which really held the germ of the idea of the 'loop-stitch.' But neither of these was a sewing-machine, and before Duncan's invention some one else had been seized with another idea.

This was a London cabinet-maker called Thomas Saint, who in or about 1790 took out a patent for a machine for sewing leather, or rather for 'quilting, stitching, and making shoes, boots, splatterdashes, clogs, and other articles.' This patent, unfortunately, was taken out along with other inventions in connection with leather, and it was quite by accident that, some eighty years later, the specification of it was discovered by one who had made for himself a name in connection with sewing-machines. Even the Patent Office did not seem to have known of its existence, yet now it is clear enough that Thomas Saint's leather-sewing-machine of 1790 was the first genuine sewing-machine ever constructed, and that it was on what is now known as the 'chain-stitch' principle. Rude as it was, it is declared by experts to have anticipated most of the ingenious ideas of half a century of successive inventors, not one of whom, however, could in all human probability have as much as heard of Saint's machine. This is not the least curious incident in the history of the sewing-machine.

In Saint's machine the features are—the overhanging arm, which is the characteristic of many modern machines; the perpendicular action of the Singer machine; the eye-pointed needle of the Howe machine; the pressure surfaces peculiar to the Howe machine; and a 'feed' system equal to that of the most modern inventions. Whether Saint's machine was ever worked in a practical workshop or not, it was unquestionably a practicable machine, constructed by one who knew pretty well what he was about, and what he wanted to achieve.

Now note the date of Thomas Saint's patent (1790), and next note the date of the invention of Barthelmy Thimonnier, of St Etienne, who is claimed in France as the inventor of the sewing-machine. In 1830, Thimonnier constructed a machine, principally of wood, with an arrangement of barbed needles, for stitching gloves, and in the following year he began business in Paris, with a partner, as an army clothier. The firm of Thimonnier, Petit, & Co., however, did not thrive, because the *ouvriers* thought they saw in the principal's machine an instrument destined to ruin them; much as the Luddites viewed steam machinery in the cotton districts of England. An idea of that sort rapidly germinates heat, and Thimonnier's workshop was one day invaded by an angry mob, who smashed all the machines, and compelled the inventor to seek safety in flight. Poor Thimonnier was absent from Paris for three years, but in 1831 returned with another and more perfect machine. This was so coldly received, both by employers and workmen in the tailoring trade, that he left the capital, and, journeying through France with his machine, paid his way by exhibiting it in the towns and villages as a curiosity. After a few years, however, Thimonnier fell in with a capitalist who believed in him and his machine, and was willing to stake money on both. A partnership was entered into for the manufacture and sale of the machine, and all promised well for the new firm, when the Revolution of 1848 broke out, stopped the business, and ruined both the inventor and the capitalist. Thimonnier died in 1857 in a poorhouse, of a broken heart.

This French machine was also on the chain-stitch principle, but it was forty years later than Saint's. In between the two came, about 1832, one Walter Hunt, of New York, who is said to have constructed a sewing-machine with the lock-stitch movement. Some uncertainty surrounds this claim, and Elias Howe is the person usually credited with this important, indeed invaluable, invention. Whether Howe had ever seen Hunt's machine, we know not; but Hunt's machine was never patented, seems never to have come into practical working, and is, indeed, said to have been unworkable. There is, besides, in the Polytechnic at Vienna, the model of a machine, dated 1814, constructed by one Joseph Madersberg, a tailor of the Tyrol, which embodies the lock-stitch idea—working with two threads. But this also was unworkable, and Elias Howe has the credit of having produced the first really practical lock-stitch sewing-machine.

His was a life of vicissitude and of ultimate triumph, both in fame and fortune. He was born at a small place in Massachusetts in 1819, and as a youth went to Boston, there to work as a mechanic. While there, and when about twenty-two years old, the idea occurred to him at his work of passing a thread through cloth and securing it on the other side by another thread. Here we perceive the germ of the lock-stitch—the two threads. Howe began to experiment with a number of bent wires in lieu of needles, but he lacked the means to put his great idea to a thorough practical test. Thus it slumbered for three years, when he went to board and lodge with an old schoolfellow named Fisher, who, after a while, agreed to advance Howe one hundred pounds in return for a half-share in the invention should it prove a success. Thus aided, in 1845 Howe completed his first machine, and actually made himself a suit of clothes with it; and this would be just about the time of Thimonnier's temporary prosperity in alliance with the capitalist, Mogrini.

Feeling sure of his ground, Howe took bold steps to 'boom' his invention. He challenged five of the most expert sewers in a great Boston clothing factory to a sewing match. Each of them was to sew a certain strip of cloth, and Howe undertook to sew five strips, torn in halves, before each man had completed his one strip. The arrangements completed, the match began, and to the wonder of everybody, Howe finished his five seams before the others were half done one seam. But murmurs instead of cheers succeeded the victory. He was angrily reproached for trying to take the bread out of the mouth of the honest working-man, and a cry was raised among the workers (as it has been heard time and again in the history of industrial development) to smash the machine. Howe, indeed, had much difficulty in escaping from the angry mob, with his precious machine under his arm.

In Howe's experience we thus see one parallel with Thimonnier's; but there was another. The American was quite as poor and resourceless as the Frenchman, and the next step in Howe's career was that he went on tour to the country fairs to exhibit his machine for a trifling fee, in order to keep body and soul together. People went in flocks to see the thing as a clever toy, but no one would 'take hold' of it as a practical machine. And so, in despair of doing any good with it in America, Elias Howe, in 1846, sent his brother to England to see if a market could not be found for the invention there. The brother succeeded in making terms with one William Thomas, staymaker, in Cheapside, London, and he sent for Elias to come over.

The price to be paid by Thomas for the patent was two hundred and fifty pounds, but Howe was to make certain alterations in it so as to adapt it to the special requirements of the purchaser. While engaged in perfecting the machine he was to receive wages at the rate of three pounds per week, and this wage he seems to have received for nearly two years. But he failed to achieve what Thomas wanted, and Thomas, after spending a good deal of money over the experiments, abandoned the thing altogether. Howe was thus a-strand again, and he returned to America as poor as ever, leaving his machine behind him in pawn for advances to pay his passage home. And yet there were 'millions in it.'

This was in the year 1849, and just about the time when Howe was returning to America, another American, named Bostwich, was sending over to England a machine which he had invented for imitating hand-stitching, by means of cog-wheels and a bent needle. And a year or two after Howe's return, one Charles Morey, of Manchester, attempted to carry out the same stitch on a somewhat different plan, but failed to find sufficient pecuniary support. Indeed, poor Morey had a tragic end, for, taking his machine to Paris in the hope of finding a purchaser there, he incurred some debt which he could not pay, and was clapped into the Mazas prison. While there he inadvertently broke the rules, and was shot by the guard for failing to reply to a challenge which he did not understand.

When Howe got back to the United States he found a number of ingenious persons engaged in producing or experimenting in sewing-machines, and some of them were trenching on his own patent rights. He raised enough money, somehow, to redeem his pawned machine in England, and then raised actions against all who were infringing it. The litigation was tremendous both in duration and expense, but it ended in the victory of Elias Howe, to whom, by the finding of the court, the other patentees were found liable for royalty. It is said that Howe, who as we have seen left London in debt, received, before his patent expired in 1867, upwards of two million dollars in royalties alone.

But ingenious men were now busy in both hemispheres in perfecting what up till about fifty years ago was regarded as nothing better than a clever toy. Besides Morey, the Manchester man we have mentioned, a Huddersfield machinist, named Drake, brought out a machine to work with a shuttle. About the same time, or a little later, a young Nottingham man, named John Fisher, constructed a machine with a sort of lock-stitch movement, which he afterwards adapted to a double loop-stitch. But Fisher's machine was intended rather for embroidering than for plain sewing.

Passing over some minor attempts, the next great development was that of Allen Wilson, who, without having heard either of Howe's or of any other machine, constructed one in 1849, the design of which, he said, he had been meditating for two years. His first machine had original features, however much it may have been anticipated in principle by Howe's patent. In Wilson's second design, a rotary hook was substituted for a two-pointed shuttle, and by other improvements he achieved a greater speed than had been attained by other inventors. Later still he added the 'four-motion feed,' which is adopted on most of the machines now in general use.

This idea was an elaboration of a principle which seems to have first occurred to the unfortunate Morey. In Morey's machine there was a horizontal bar with short teeth, which caught the fabric and dragged it forward as the stitches were completed. It took nearly thirty years, however, to evolve the perfect 'feed' motion out of Morey's first crude germ.

While Wilson was working away, perfecting his now famous machine, an observing and thoughtful young millwright was employed in a New York factory. One day a sewing-machine was sent in for repairs, and after examining its mechanism, this young man, whose name was Isaac Singer, confidently expressed his belief that he could make a better one. He did not propose either to appropriate or abandon the principle, but to improve upon it. Instead of a curved needle, as in Howe's and Wilson's machines, he adopted a straight one, and gave it a perpendicular instead of a curvular motion. And for propelling the fabric he introduced a wheel, instead of the toothed bar of the Morey design.

It need hardly be said that the Singer machine is now one of the most widely known, and is turned out in countless numbers in enormous factories on both sides of the Atlantic. It is not so well known, perhaps, that Singer, who was a humble millwright in 1850, and who died in 1875, left an estate valued at three millions sterling—all amassed in less than twenty-five years!

The machines of Howe, Wilson, and Singer were on the lock-stitch principle, and the next novelty was the invention of Grover and Baker, who brought out a machine working with two needles and two continuous threads. After this came the Gibbs machine, the story of which may be briefly told.

About the year 1855, James G. Gibbs heard of the Grover and Baker machine, and having a turn for mechanics, began to ponder over how the action described was produced. He got an illustration, but could make nothing of it, and not for a year did he obtain sight of a Singer machine at work. As in the case of Singer with Wilson's machine, so Gibbs thought he could improve on Singer's, and turn out one less ponderous and complicated. He set to work, and in a very short time took out a patent for a new lock-stitch machine. But he was not satisfied with this, and experimented away, with an idea of making a chain-stitch by means of a revolving looper. This idea he eventually put into practical form, and took out a patent for the first chain-stitch sewing-machine.

Since the days of Elias Howe, the number of patents taken out for sewing-machines has been legion—certainly not less than one thousand—and probably no labour-saving appliance has received more attention at the hands both of inventors and of the general public. There is scarcely a household in the land now, however humble, without a sewing-machine of some sort, and in factories and warehouses they are to be numbered by the thousand. Some machinists have directed their ingenuity to the reduction of wear and tear, others to the reduction of noise, others to acceleration of speed, others to appliances for supplying the machine in a variety of ways, others for adapting it to various complicated processes of stitching and embroidering. Some users prefer the lock-stitch and some the chain-stitch principle, and each system has its peculiar advantages according to the character of the work to be sewn.

The latest development is a combination of both principles in one machine. Some two or three years ago, Mr Edward Kohler patented a machine which will produce either a lock-stitch or a chain-stitch, as may be desired, and an embroidery stitch as well. By a very ingenious contrivance the machinery is altered by the simple movement of a button, and (when the chain-stitch is required) the taking out of the bobbin from the shuttle. If the embroidery stitch is wanted, the button is turned without removing the bobbin, and the lock-stitch and chain-stitch are combined in one new stitch, with which very elaborate effects can be produced. It is said that the Kohler principle can be easily adapted to all, or most, existing machines.

With this latest development from the ingenious idea of Thomas Saint, one hundred years ago, we leave the story of the sewing-machine, merely adding, in conclusion, that about two and a half million sewing-machines are turned out by the factories annually, and the demand for them increases year after year.

THE MYSTERY OF THE GOLDEN LLAMA.

CHAPTER III.—THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY.

In due course there was an inquest upon the body of Juan Almirez. Mrs Placer, the doctor whom she had summoned and who had attended within a few minutes of my discovery of the body, and myself were the only witnesses. I repeated what I knew of the history of the dead man, deposed to the fact of his dining out on the night previous to his death with some scientific friends, and related (so far as I was able) the circumstances of his coming in a few minutes before midnight and going up-stairs to his room. He was not, to my knowledge, in any difficulties or embarrassment. On the contrary, he had always appeared to be of a peculiarly cheerful temperament and in easy pecuniary circumstances. I recalled the details of his lively conversation with me two days before his death, when he had discussed his plans for the future and made the appointment with me for the night of the twenty-second. In answer to a question put to me by one of the jury, I was quite certain that he was alone when I heard him come in and go up-stairs. If there had been any one with him I should undoubtedly have noticed the sound of the additional footsteps. That concluded my examination. Mrs Placer's evidence, which followed, was mainly formal. The doctor deposed that the appearances of the body were consistent with poisoning by chloroform. Death had probably taken place about an hour or an hour and a half before he saw the deceased. It was impossible, however, to say with certainty when the fatal dose had been taken, as the deceased would no doubt lie in a state of stupor for many hours before death ensued. Taking into consideration the reported cases on the subject and the probable quantity of chloroform that had been swallowed, he should imagine that the poison must have been taken very shortly after midnight, if not still earlier. He did not think it possible that the chloroform could have been administered to the deceased against his will. It was conceivable that he might have taken it accidentally—as, for instance, if he had been in a state of intoxication at the time. Upon the whole, however, he had no hesitation in saying that he believed it to be a case of suicide.

The inquest was then adjourned, in order that the police might make inquiries for the relations of the deceased and ascertain with whom he dined on the night immediately before his death.

On its resumption it appeared that the history which Almirez had related to me was substantially correct. He was well known as a traveller and a man of science. His books, published from time to time, had attracted considerable attention. At the same time he would seem to have been a man who had made but few friends; and apparently he had no living relations, either in Ecuador or in Europe. Further, the police reported that they had been utterly unable to discover of whom the party of gentlemen who had entertained Almirez at dinner had consisted, or where any such dinner had taken place. On the other hand, a waiter at a Soho restaurant had been met with who strongly believed Almirez to have been a man who had dined at one of his tables on the night of the twenty-first, sat there smoking for some little time afterwards, and finally left about eight o'clock, after making inquiries as to the pieces which were being performed at the neighbouring theatres. The witness had taken particular notice of the gentleman, he said, because he seemed in such good humour and remembered the waiter so handsomely.

This strange piece of evidence (which I, for one, had no doubt was based upon a mistake of identity) concluded the investigation; and the jury, after a somewhat lengthy deliberation, returned a verdict to the effect that the deceased had committed suicide, but that there was no evidence on which they could determine his state of mind at the time of the occurrence.

During the interval of the adjournment an incident had occurred as to which I cannot but express my deep regret at the course which I was tempted to take. It must be remembered in my extenuation that I was suffering severely at the time from the shock of Almirez' death; but I feel only too keenly how inadequate an excuse that must seem for conduct which (I must confess) was prompted for the most part by motives of sheer cowardice. How terrible a punishment my weakness must surely have brought upon me, but for the action of another person, will appear hereafter.

Immediately after Almirez' death a will had been discovered among his papers, dated a few months back, and appointing as his executors a certain well-known scientist and myself. By this will he devoted the whole of his property, his collections, and his unpublished manuscripts in specified shares to various museums and other scientific institutions. It was during the examination of Almirez' belongings, with a view to the settlement of this distribution, that my co-executor came across the box containing the golden llama. Some one—I know not whom—had readjusted the lid, and inside the box there still lay the card which Almirez had placed there when he gave it into my hands: 'For my dear and valued friend Angus Macpherson. A farewell gift.' My colleague instantly showed it to me, with the remark that poor Almirez had evidently desired to make me a parting present—a strong proof, he said, that his death had been premeditated. In that instant I took the step which I do not attempt to defend. I felt that it was impossible for me to explain the true state of the facts; I shrank shamefacedly from a confession of my weakness on that night; moreover, I really desired to have something that had belonged to my dead friend, and argued that it could do no harm to retake that which he had already given to me. With hardly a compunction I accepted that view of the situation which was presented to me, and acknowledged that it did seem exceedingly probable that Almirez had wished me to have the golden llama. In that same hour I again became its possessor.

I will say in justice to myself that it was not long before I became keenly sensible of the wrong that I had done in concealing my original renunciation of the gift; but it was too late then to explain the matter. As time wore on, moreover, I began to consider that, reprehensible as my conduct had certainly been, no great harm could come of it after all. I conceived a great fancy for the little squat image; I liked to have it on the table in front of me when I wrote; my unreasoning terror of it was a thing of the past; more than all, it reminded me of the dead man whom I had so dearly esteemed. And so nearly a year passed away from that night when Almirez had taken his own life; and meanwhile I worked hard and profited (I trust) by my opportunities, and began to advance a little at last in the exercise of my calling.

It was about three weeks before the anniversary of Almirez' death, so far as I can remember, that I became conscious of a relapse into low spirits. I fell into a habit of dwelling by day upon the mystery of his death, dreaming of the livid dead face, as it lay back, sunken among the scarlet cushions, with painful iteration during the livelong hours of the night, recalling to myself again and again with horrible distinctness the details of that dreadful day. It was in vain that I laughed at my nervous folly; it was in vain that I tried to smother the vague dread with which I looked forward to the twenty-first day of March. At length—about the middle of the month—I decided to try the effect of a change of my surroundings; and, telling Mrs Placer that she might expect me back again in a fortnight's time, I shifted my quarters to apartments in a quiet street in Kennington, where the broad roll of the misty river and a couple of miles of jostling house-tops lay between me and the scene of Juan Almirez' death.

There could be no doubt about the benefit that was wrought in me by the change. In one respect alone I regretted it—and that respect the character of my landlady. Miss M'Rae was as slovenly as Mrs Placer had been neat; as untrustworthy as Mrs Placer had been honest; as habitually intoxicated as Mrs Placer had been rigidly sober. It took me but little time to discover these characteristics. Under other circumstances I should probably have changed my lodgings yet once more; but, as it was, I decided to remain in my present quarters until the end of my fortnight's seclusion.

All went well with me till within two or three days of the twenty-first. Then my old unreasoning terrors began to return to me. Still I was able to keep them within bounds, and it was with tolerable easiness of mind that I awaited the recurrence of the fatal day. I had determined how I should employ it. I was going to take a long country walk, to distract my thoughts by exercise, by the moving scenery, by the freshness and sweetness of the earth in its spring-time. I was going to tire myself out, to creep home to Kennington at the close of the day, and to rise the next morning with all my follies and my fancies shaken out of me, and my faculties braced up to encounter a fresh day's work. Such was the resolve that I had formed.

The day turned out to be all that I could desire. As I strode through the crowded streets that led towards the suburban rusticity of southern London, the sun was shining brightly in a limpid, cloudless sky, the morning air was crisp, and pure, and livening. As I entered at last into the solitude of the green fields and windy commons that the builder's hand had not then reached, all Nature seemed joyous with the promise of approaching summer. The birds were twittering gaily from the trees, the fair green buds were bursting from their sheaths, the air was filled with an indefinable sense of life and growth and hopefulness. Confronted by such scenes, my despondency could not but yield. How many miles I walked that day I dare not say; I have only a vague idea that for hour after hour I tramped along, luxuriating in the brisk exercise and unwonted freedom, and that it was only when the sun was already low in the pale sky, and the smoke-dome of London hung like a tiny distant cloud, that at last, after a hearty meal at a wayside inn, I turned my steps towards home. My expedient had proved completely successful, and I felt not a little self-satisfied in having mastered my foolish forebodings. True, as twilight fell on the broad white road, and the chilly wind of evening rose and swept over the bare fields, I experienced some slight return of my uneasiness; but it quickly passed away, and, when I drew once more within the region of the gas-lit streets, I was feeling only the comfortable exultation of a man who is well satisfied with his day's work.

It was past ten o'clock when I reached the door of my lodgings. I had stopped on the outskirts of London to get some supper; and my intention was to go straight to bed—for I was very tired—and so sleep off the effects of my long walk.

I was stumbling up the narrow stairs, which were but dimly lighted by the gas-jet above the street-door, when I almost fell against the figure of Miss M'Rae. She was standing back in the darkest corner of the staircase, where it turned abruptly to the right—standing back so motionless and so close against the wall, that it seemed strangely as though she had wished me to pass her unnoticed in the shadow. As I paused momentarily before passing on, she moved out somewhat into the light that fell from the flickering gas-jet, and I saw that her face was flushed and puffy. There was an odd look, half of fear and half of insolence, in her shifting eyes. Miss M'Rae had been drinking.

I had already passed her on the stairs when she spoke to me.

'I was just going to step out round the corner, to get a bit of something for breakfast,' she said thickly, 'if you don't mind being left alone in the 'ouse.'

The maid-of-all-work slept at her own home, a few streets distant.

'Very well, Miss M'Rae,' I answered. 'Don't be longer than you can help. I am going straight to bed now. I shan't sit up.'

She made no answer, but her eyes followed me up the staircase. My last impression, as I shut the door of my bedroom, was of a sodden face turned upwards in the gas-light and of those drunken eyes watching me to my room.

. . . . . .

It seemed to me that I had slept but a few minutes, when I was awakened by a loud and continuous knocking at the street-door. Evidently Miss M'Rae had loitered on her errand; and it became my duty to go down-stairs and see who the imperious visitor might be. I must confess, however, that the duty was so repugnant to me that I waited for some minutes before I stirred, hoping in vain that I should hear the rattle of Miss M'Rae's key in the keyhole and the husky tones of Miss M'Rae's voice speaking in the hall below. At last, as the knocking became more and more persistent, I tumbled wrathfully out of bed, and huddled on a portion of my clothes. What was my surprise, when I glanced at my watch before leaving the room, to see that it was nearly two o'clock! Miss M'Rae must have been gone for close upon four hours.

A gruff voice saluted me as I opened the street-door, and a draught of cold air ran up the passage.

'Well, I 'ope I've been kept long enough standing here?' the voice said. ''Eavy sleepers, seemingly, in this 'ouse?'

'Who are you?' I demanded, somewhat savagely, for I certainly thought the grievance was not wholly on his side.

'Does a party of the name of M'Rae live here?' the voice went on, without heeding my question.

In the same instant, however, the owner of the voice answered it satisfactorily by stepping into the doorway, where I could see him more distinctly. It was a constable.

'Yes,' I said, 'Miss M'Rae lives here. What do you want with her?'

'Nothing with *'er*, sir,' the man replied more civilly. 'We only wanted to find out if the address was correct. That's all.—Might I ask who you are, sir?'

'Certainly,' I said, and I told him my name. 'I am lodging here,' I added. 'Miss M'Rae is the landlady.'

'Oh, indeed, sir?—Then I think as 'ow you'll 'ave to look out for new lodgings in the morning.'

The man's impudence astounded me. 'Why?' I said shortly.

'Because the party of the name of M'Rae 'as gone and drowned herself,' he answered.

'Drowned herself?'

'Yes, sir, drowned herself!—Was seen 'anging about Vauxhall Bridge shortly after eleven-thirty P.M. in a state of intoxication. Was cautioned, and told to go 'ome. Shortly after, a splash was 'eard, and on a boat being put off, the body was recovered. The address here was found on 'er.—I'll be coming round again in the morning,' he added after a pause, as he turned away from the door. 'Good-night, sir.'

'Good-night.'

What was there in these awful midnight hours of the twenty-first of March that was fatal to those around me? Was it a mere coincidence? If not, what direful agency was at work? Asking myself these questions, I staggered up the stairs and wandered into my study. Sleep was banished from my eyes for that night at any rate. I felt unnaturally, horribly wide-awake. Mechanically I lit the gas, and sat down at my writing-table. As I did so, my eyes fell on something that was unfamiliar—a blank space at the corner of the table where my letter-weight had stood. *The golden llama was gone.*

A WESTERN TOWN.

THE phenomenal growth of towns and cities in the 'Great West' has for over a decade been everywhere a fruitful source of wonderment and discussion. It is certainly an astonishing fact, especially to the inhabitants of older and more settled countries, that regions hitherto unknown can within a few years be brought inside the sphere of advanced civilisation; and the existence of towns made possible by the extraordinary development of the surrounding resources.

The obstacles to city-building in a new and little known country are evidently many and embarrassing; and were it not that the projectors were men of iron will and strong determination, their efforts would be completely nullified. Chief among the difficulties to be surmounted are rough and impassable country, dense forests, rushing rivers, complete isolation, reckless citizens, absence of law, scarcity of provisions, and no facilities of traffic. These and kindred difficulties almost insuperable must all be met, and are; proving more eloquent than words the perseverance and 'grit' of the Western pioneer.

So many sudden transitions from primeval solitude to commercial activity have occurred in the West, that to relate half of them would require a volume, and damage perhaps the reputation for veracity of the writer. For the purpose, then, of describing the conditions of Western life and towns, let the history of the town of Kaslo, British Columbia, suffice as a fair sample of the remainder.

Where the city of Kaslo now stands, five years ago was a piece of gently rising alluvial deposit at the mouth of a river, undisturbed by anything but the call of the native Indian, or the splash of the land-locked salmon in the lake before it. Now, it is a duly incorporated city, with mayor, aldermen, and letters-patent; and, what is more important, the natural shipping-point for the rich ores of the contiguous mining country.

In the autumn of 1890, an enterprising millwright, attracted by the beautiful position of the site of Kaslo, settled on the ground as a 'pre-emptor' or first holder. A year after began the first 'excitement' which led to the establishment of Kaslo as a place of trade. This was the discovery of the 'Noble Five,' 'Payne,' and 'Washington' mines. These 'finds' were so very rich in silver and lead that the reports of them which went abroad were at first received with incredulity. There were not wanting, however, men of daring who determined to enter the then *terra incognita*, and see for themselves if the country was as rich as reported. They returned to their homes, verified the news, and made immediate preparations to remove to the new Eldorado, as the camp was commonly called, in the somewhat extravagant language of the West.

So anxious now did men become to secure a 'mining claim' or piece of mineral ground, that 'claims' were 'staked' upon the surface of the seven feet of snow which covered the much-prized ground. A regular mining 'fever' had now set in; and in the spring of 1892 over a thousand hardy 'prospectors' were in the mountains around Kaslo picking and peering for hidden wealth.

Up to this time, one house – that of the first holder—and a few small log cabins were the only places of abode in the newly established town site. But now, merchants, hotel-keepers, and others flocked to the place, and a scene of active bustle commenced. At this stage it was visited by 'capitalists,' who purchased blocks of city 'real estate,' and secured control and interests in the best mining properties. This of course marked the place and its mines as the seat of secure investment; consequently, it grew and prospered. In October of that year (1892), a newspaper, its first edition coming out on silk, appeared, an event which was immediately followed by the construction of a wagon-road to the mines.

The history of the town from then until the acute stage of the silver crisis was reached, was one of steady growth and expansion; the building of houses and places of business being only limited by the supply of 'lumber.' It should be stated that in the West, all buildings, except in large cities, are built of timber, or 'lumber' as it is locally termed. The town was now in the zenith of its glory, and day by day its population was augmented by hundreds, brought upon steamboats from the nearest railway point. The streets were thronged with people, while the air was resonant with a never-ending din of hammer, plane, and saw. The tents pitched on all sides resembled those of an army, and over every camp-fire the merits of the new town and country were eagerly discussed.

Within two years of the founding of Kaslo, there were within its confines sixteen licensed hotels and three public boarding-houses; two large 'dry goods' or drapers' 'stores;' four general merchants', one hardwareman's, three grocers', and two furnishers' places of business; two 'tinners,' three tailors, five bakers, and one brewer, two jewellers, two butchers, four lawyers, two chemists, and two doctors; two newspapers, one bank, one powder-factory, and a telephone and telegraph system. Besides were numerous other places of business not necessary to mention, and three thousand five hundred persons drawn from everywhere. Never before was seen such an orderly, well-conducted mining town, for it was on British soil, and British law must be respected.

Like a bolt from the blue came now the closing of the Indian mints to silver, as a consequence of the repeal of the Bland and Sherman Acts in the United States. This gave such a shock to the currency all the world over, that silver went still lower than it already was, and almost immediately the effect was felt in Kaslo. Here things at once assumed a serious aspect, and many became so disheartened in this most wonderful of silver 'camps,' that the population, hitherto so rapidly and recklessly rising, began steadily and sadly sinking.

Misfortunes, it is said, never come alone, and the worst had yet to come to Kaslo. The tide had turned, and its star was now in the descendent. On the 26th of February 1894 a great fire consumed, despite the desperate efforts of its citizens, over half the business portion of the town. But this was not all. On the 3d day of June following, a fearful visitation of storm and flood destroyed some forty more houses and homes. The cup was now full, and the town, by the faint-hearted, pronounced doomed.

As steadily as the tide of immigration had streamed in, so steadily did the emigration flow out, until at the present time are left but five hundred men and women. These, with true Anglo-Saxon perseverance, are steadily surmounting every obstacle and commencing anew the task of town-making. As a reward for their tenacity, while unremunerative properties in the U.S.A. have closed, which will tend to equalise the supply and demand, their adjacent mines have been found so extremely rich that they can still be worked with a small profit, at the present extremely low price of silver.

To illustrate the sudden transitions from silence to sound, from development to decay, that occur in the West, and prove how closely the conditions of life, even at such a distance, are interwoven and in touch with the institutions and policy of the mother-country, no better example could be given than the history of the town of Kaslo.

GREEN RUSHES, O!

By S. Baring-Gould.

Young people—the rule is all but invariable—run together like globules of quicksilver. There is so much mercury in their veins, gravitation is so fundamental a law of nature. The difficulty is to keep them apart, not to bring them together.

But human nature is capricious. There is no hard and fast rule with that; whatever general law may be thought to govern it, exceptions will be found, and among these phenomena—these deviations from the norm—were Tom and Jenny.

These were just the two who would not and could not be brought together. Their natural instincts, not inclinations, drove them apart, and not all the efforts of well-meaning friends and relatives, not all the thrusting and nudging in the world, appeared likely to give the impulse to these two to make them come together as they ought, and as they wished.

There was the oddness of the situation—it lay in the last words of my last sentence. *As they wished.* Tom had the greatest admiration for Jenny, but it was so excessive that he was shy of being with her—he adored her, but from a distance; and Jenny considered that there was no young man in the universe so far as she knew it—and she knew no more of it than is comprised within the bounds of the forest of Dartmoor—no young man at all worthy of being desired, like unto Tom, but then so great was her respect for him that—she ran away from him. If the two passed on the highroad, an awkward salutation was all they accorded each other, a grunt and a slouch of one shoulder from Tom, a movement of the lips to form the words 'How do y' do, now, Tom?' from Jenny, but not the words themselves. If it should so happen that Tom saw Jenny ahead of him, walking along in the same direction, then not all the king's horses nor all the king's men could draw on Tom to hasten his steps and catch her up. On the contrary, he immediately jumped a wall, ran over a field, jumped another, made a vast loop of at least a mile, always at the run, and came out on the road again half a mile ahead of Jenny.

Now it happens that on Dartmoor there is a little church near the Dart, newly constructed, in which a curate ministers once a Sunday. Precisely because Jenny went there for her devotions, not moved by any theological differences and doctrinal scruples, Tom frequented the Bible Christian chapel. He had on one occasion been played a trick on leaving the little church. The congregation, seeing him issue from the sacred door alongside of Jenny, immediately fell apart; some hurried forward, some hung back, with the kindest sympathy possible, to allow of Tom offering his arm—at all events his company—to Jenny on their way back to the farms where they severally dwelt, and which were close to each other. But this consideration on the part of the fellow-worshippers in the church so agitated Jenny, and so alarmed Tom, that she ran and clung to the side of a farmer's wife going her way, and Tom turned tail altogether, and walked to Holne in a direction diametrically opposite to that which he must ultimately pursue.

There can be no question but that, as a general rule, we are all inclined to believe to be true that which we hope to be true. But there are exceptions to this rule also, and precisely Tom and Jenny proved exceptions. What was obvious to every one else, what was certain to every one else, was precisely that on which each was sceptical. All the neighbours knew that Tom was madly in love with Jenny, and that Jenny could fancy no other lad than Tom; that, not to put too fine a point on it, they were cut out for each other, and for no one else. But this was what neither could be induced to believe.

There was absolutely no impediment why these two should not be joined together in holy matrimony. The banns might have been proclaimed from the tops of every tor, and no one would have forbidden them. On the contrary, they would have been hailed with acclamation. The only impediment existed in themselves; they would not come together.

Tom was an active, industrious man, a miner at Vitifer, who came up out of the shaft, red and rosy in garb as well as in face from the tin ore; he earned his sixteen shillings a week, and had a little cabin of his father's construction in which he lived with his sister, near the King's Oven, where in ancient days the tin was run into blocks and stamped with the royal mark.

Jenny was the last remaining maiden in a wooden barrack erected by the proprietor of the Vitifer mine, about which barrack a word must be said. When a new lease had been taken of the tin rights at the head of the Wibburn, then a long shanty of wood, tarred black, had been erected by the manager, who had considered that girls might very well be employed in sorting ore. He had engaged a dozen and a half, and had lodged them in this shanty under the supervision of a respectable matron. But the scheme broke down, because human blood is of the nature of quicksilver; the miners and the maids ran together and made pairs, and there were marriages one after another, till, within a twelvemonth the shanty was cleared of all the lasses except Jenny; and the matron had no other work to do than look after Jenny, who of all girls least needed looking after, for she ran away from the only man for whom she cared, yet not half so fast as he did from her.

Now Tom's sister was impatient to get away. She did not love the life on the moor; she desired above all things to take a situation in Torquay, which is as lively a place as invalids can make it; and consumptive people have more craving for excitement and amusement of every kind than those who ought to be kept from it. Such is human nature.

The frolicsome invalids who frequent Torquay have made it a very elysium for house and parlour maids; and Tom's sister had before her the golden dream of a lively winter at Torquay, and a sleepy summer there, when the invalids are departed, and the servants have nothing else to do than disport themselves on parade and lounge, and to boat and carry on with the boatmen and railway porters.

Moreover, the matron at the shanty was impatient. The manager of the Vitifer mine was impatient. The former desired to be in some prospering concern, and not a failing one like the barrack for maidens; and the latter did not see the advantage of paying and maintaining one whole matron, with expensive respectability, for the sake of one girl alone.

Consequently, it would oblige and relieve three persons if only Tom and Jenny would come together. But they were willing and prompt to do—just anything but that.

Jenny was an orphan; had no one to consult but herself. Tom was without parents; he had no one to consult but himself. 'Why the dickens should they not make a match of it?' every one asked; but no one could give an answer, except the captain of the mine, who, quoting Artemus Ward, said: 'It's downright sheer cussedness and nothink else.'

What on earth prevented Tom and Jenny from speaking to each other right out of their hearts? Precisely because each felt so strange in his or her soul, or heart, or mind, or all three together, that neither quite knew what was the matter. Only now and then, on the still moor, when the sun was shining, and the blue shadows—blue as cobalt—lay motionless on the distant hills, and Tom had stolen away from his mates to eat his dinner alone in the heather, did he lean his head in his hand and say: 'Darn it all, I can't get her out of my mind.'

And only when Jenny went to her bed, and laid her head on her pillow, did she sigh out to herself: 'Oh dear! I do like Tom tremendous!'

Each took the most elaborate precautions to conceal from other eyes what was in theirs. Neither mentioned the other's name, and if a third spoke it out, then Tom or Jenny, whichever it was who heard the other spoken of, had a flutter of the heart, and a colour in the cheek, and looked away from the speaker, as if what was said did not interest at all, and yet listened with both ears. This went on for a whole year, and each confidently believed that no one had the smallest conception of the love that consumed each heart. But it was perhaps that each rather overdid it that every one came to know of it.

Then, at once, all set to work to bring the two lovers together. Most earnest in her endeavours was Joanna, the sister of Tom. At one time she had disliked Jenny for no particular reason, but now she cultivated her acquaintance, invited her to the cottage, walked with her, and wormed her way into her affections. Then all at once out popped the words: 'I say, Jenny, you are cruel fond of my brother Tom, baint you now?'

'I—I—I—— Get along!' answered Jenny, flushing to the temples.

'You need not deny it,' said Joanna; 'I have eyes as well as another, and I can see it as distinct as I can the rocks on old Bellever Tor. You're terrible took up wi' my brother Tom.'

'It baint true,' answered Jenny, the tears of vexation filling her eyes. 'It's a scandal to say such drashy stuff.'

'It is true; and what I know also is, that Tom worships the very ground you tread.'

'That's false,' answered Jenny; 'for he rins away from me wheniver he sees me, jist for all the world as if I were a long-cripple [viper].'

'He does love you, I vow and protest.'

'He's got a queer way o' showing it, then,' retorted Jenny, and that was, Joanna was fain to admit it to herself, an unanswerable argument against her proposition.

After this conversation Jenny kept away from Joanna; their friendship had had a douche of cold water thrown on it, and she would neither walk with her nor salute her. As she said to the matron, Joanna had insulted her.

After a lapse of three weeks matters were patched up between them, and Joanna again broached the subject. Again Jenny refused to be convinced. As she said to herself: 'What am I? I'm naught but a poor maid that ha'n't got no belongings. I've been left behind when all the other maidens got married, 'cos none would have me; and there is Tom, as straight and stiff a chap as any in the works, and has laid by a lot o' money, folks say—and there aren't one of the mining boys as has married is fit to hold a candle to him. Git along with yourself for an idjot, Jenny, for thinkin' he can care a fardin' for you.'

Joanna also attacked her brother. 'Tom,' said she, 'here am I slavin' as a nigger, and all for no wages but pure love, and, as you know very well, I want to be off into service to Torquay. You are holding me here on to this desolate moor, where one sees no faces lookin' in at the winder but that of a bullock or a sheep or a Dartmoor colt, and I wants to be off—terrible. You're aged twenty-seven, and ought to be married, a great hulkin' chap like you. If you'd the feelins of a man, you'd die o' shame!'

'Shame at what, Jonah?' He called her Jonah as the short for Joanna.

'A chap o' twenty-seven and not married! I say it's reg'lar scandalous; and all the county cries shame on you.'

'But who'd have me?'

'Why—bless the boy!—Jenny.'

Then Tom turned away from his sister, and went out to wash himself of the pink soil that was on his hands from the tin mine; and as he washed he said to himself: 'Jenny have me! The prettiest, tidiest, peartest [liveliest] maiden was iver seen since Eve! A chap like me—

all mucky with chrome and clay. Git along for an idjot, Tom, for thinking such things.'

This did not answer. Then the manager of the Vitifer mine took the matter in hand; so did the matron of the shanty. The master said to one of the miners who was single: 'Bill Hawk, I wish you'd do me a favour, and I'll give you five bob.'

'Yes, sir; what is it?'

'Look here, Bill; I want you to walk out that girl Jenny, gallivant with her a bit, and'——

'But, sir, I'm taking on with Mary Bolt, down to Chagford.'

'Never mind—only just for a bit. There is that confounded fool Tom won't see that he must have Jenny; and if we can make him jealous, it might work.'

Bill Hawk considered a moment and said: 'Well, sir, if Mary Bolt was to hear on it, she'd be in a dowse of a rampage; but if you'll make it seven and six, I'll try it on.'

'I don't object to another half-crown, Bill. So be it.'

On her part the matron invited a niece to the barrack, a very lively, dark-eyed witch of a girl, and she brought her over to the cottage of Joanna, who at once took to her and contrived means of throwing her and Tom together, and the matron and her niece talked much of Tom and his nice cottage, and his garden, and his savings before Jenny. But this also failed. Jenny would not be walked out by Bill Hawk, would not say a word to him; and the niece had not a chance with Tom, who, if he saw her in the cottage, made a run, and went off elsewhere. So passed another year. The matron had given notice, and the barrack was to be closed, Jenny would be obliged to shift for herself, and whither should she go? Joanna had become desperate, pining for the frolics of Torquay, and had announced to her brother that she had engaged herself in a situation, and that he must shift for himself; she was not going to be an 'exile of Siberia,' not for him nor any one—not another winter. If he wouldn't marry——

'Then I must take a housekeeper,' said Tom.

His sister stood back aghast.

'A housekeeper! You, an unmarried man! A housekeeper! Goodness gracious me! what is the world coming to?'

'If she's old and ugly,' protested Tom.

'No woman does think herself old and ugly. She will lay traps and snap you up. Goodness gracious me! Here's a fine kettle of fish!'

'What else can I do?' asked Tom despairingly.

'Marry,' answered Joanna.

'It takes two to do that,' said Tom disconsolately.

'Yes, of course it does. It doesn't take three, nor four, nor half-a-dozen, but two only. Go and speak to Jenny.'

'She runs away from me.'

'Run after her.'

Tom shook his head and walked away.

'Tom,' said the captain of the Vitifer mine, 'I want you to do a job for me to-day.'

'What's that, cap'n?'

'We must have the shed thatched afore the fall-rains come on, and I've borrowed Potter's wagon. I want you to go up by Cranmere and get me rushes, green rushes, to have it properly roofed in. It ought to have been done last year, but there were other things coming on, and there had been such a lot of rain that the bogs were well-nigh impassable. But this year we have had such drith [dryness] that you can get out a long way. Potter can't let us have a man, but we are welcome to the wagon.'

'Yes, sir, I'll do it. But I must have some one with me to load.'

'I know. Potter will let us have Joe Leaman, the boy; he'll do, I suppose.'

'Oh yes; any boy, or girl either, would do for that. It is only to pack the rushes in the cart as I chuck 'em up.'

'Very well, take Joe.'

Accordingly, that day—a lovely day it was—Tom went to the farm and got the cart, and Joe somewhat sulkily helped Tom to put the harness on. The horse—there was but one—and a wagon could never pass over the precarious and rugged track that was to be taken.

'I say,' observed Joe Leaman, 'it's Chagford fair to-day, and there's a circus, there is.'

'Well, what of that?' asked Tom.

'Why don't y' go and see the jumpin' tomahawkin' Injians, and the hostriches racin', and the piebald pony as sits at a table and smokes? I would if I was you.'

'I have my work to do, and I can't.'

'I'd cut work if I was you.'

Tom vouchsafed no answer, and drove out of the farmyard and along the track into the depths of the moor.

'Look here,' said Joe, 'I can cut along over the hill in no time, while you're going along the way.'

'Well, cut along.'

Joe disappeared. He did not, however, go over the hill, but slunk back to the few cottages near Vitifer, and came on Jenny.

'I say, Jenny, you're a good 'un, you be.'

'What do y' want now, Joe?'

'Look y' here, Jenny, I'm off to Chagford fair, and there's hostriches and jumpin' kangaroos there, and a piebald pony as drinks beer like a fish—and my master hev ordered me to load rushes out by Cranmere.'

'Then I reckon you must go.'

'No, I won't. But our cart be started, and I want some one to take my place. Do y' now, there's a honey, Jenny. I know you've a holiday, 'cos of the fair; so you can, and it ain't fair as I should be made to work, and want to be off to Chagford, and you got nothin' to do, and don't kear about fairing.'

'I'll go,' said Jenny, who was very good-natured; but she said: 'Who is with the hoss? Who's going to cut the rushes?'

'One of our chaps,' said Joe. He had that cunning in him which prompted him not to say that Tom was with the cart. He knew that, had he told the truth, Jenny would have been too shy to go. 'You're thunderin' good,' continued Joe. 'Now look here; you cut along wi' all your legs over that stretch o' moor yonder, and you'll come down on the other side upon the roadway and see our cart wi' the grey mare, going out to the bogs about Cranmere; you can't miss it. I'll give y' a kiss and thanks, Jenny, if you like.'

'I'll have the thanks wi'out the kiss, you monkey,' said the girl; and without suspicion of deceit, away she went, singing like a lark, across the moor in the direction indicated. She went as the crow flies, whereas the cart had to go on a track that followed a valley and then turned round a long shoulder of down, strewn with hut circles belonging to an ancient settlement in a prehistoric age. She had full three miles to walk before she could expect to catch up the cart and the grey mare.

As she walked, wading through the heather, in every flush from carmine to palest lake, she sang for very joy of heart, and yet joy mingled with an indescribable yearning:

'I would I were a sparrow,
To light on every tree;
At eve, at night, and morning,
I'd flutter, love, to thee.
And as the ship went sailing,
So lightly I would fly,
And perch me on the topmast,
My true love thence to spy.

'I would I were a gold-fish,
And in the sea did swim;
At eve, at night, and morning,
I'd follow after him.
Then o'er the bulwark looking,
He'd say, "What see I there?
A fish all golden, shining,
Like a lock of my love's hair."'

She stooped—at her feet was a clump of white heath—and she picked some and put it in her bosom. To find white heath betokens luck, it is said. Having arranged her little posy, she went on singing:

'I would I were a flower,
And in a garden grew,
At eve, at night, and morning,
Whene'er my love passed through.
And if you plucked and wore me,
Upon your heart I'd lie,
And breathing forth my fragrance,
Upon your heart I'd die.'

She sang to a plaintive minor air—an air that was in itself full of tears; and as she sang, the sad words of the sad melody took the brightness from her mood and left a longing inarticulate therein. She surmounted the hill and saw the white mare gleam in the sun and the flash of the scythe of the reaper who was to cut the rushes. Who he was she could not discern, as he was on the farther side of the cart.

She hastened her steps. She ceased singing, as she had not the breath for it now. Presently she came up with the cart, and, still not seeing who was on the farther side, said: 'Joe has gone to the fair, and I've told him—little monkey—I'd take his place. Is that you, Simon Jeffries?'

Then Tom looked up and across the cart, and Jenny started back in dismay; but so also did Tom.

Tom was angry; he thought a trick had been played on him. Jenny was ashamed; she thought Tom would consider her pert, forward. So they walked along, one on each side of the cart, neither speaking.

That was a long, tedious journey. The cart bounced about like a boat in a chopping sea. Of road there was absolutely none. The wheel on this side bounced over a great stone, then that on the other was heaved up over a hummock of turf. Wretched as the track was, it was an old one. As Tom walked along with his eyes on the ground, he saw something, stooped, and picked up a flint arrow-head—a thunderbolt, he regarded it—and put it in his pocket. To find a thunderbolt is as sure a prognostic of good-luck as to discover white heath.

At length at noon the great desolate dark waste was reached where the rushes were to be cut. Before beginning operations, Tom unharnessed the horse, and then returning to a nodule of dry peat at some little distance to the right of the stationary cart, pulled out his lunch, sat down, and began to eat.

Jenny had not brought any food with her. In the hurry of starting she had forgotten to provide herself. She withdrew to some little distance to the left of the cart, found a tuft of rushes, and sat down on that and folded her hands.

Tom had eaten the greater part of his pasty before he looked in her direction. The cart was between them, but by leaning backwards he could just see her across the back of the cart-wheels. Then he observed that she was fasting. He got up, went to the cart, and taking out a little white bag, carried it to her and said: 'Here's Joe Leaman's dinner; eat that.' Then hastily he retired to his former position, or rather to his former place, not position, for he altered the latter. Instead of sitting sideways, he turned his back on the cart, and of course thereby turned his back also on Jenny.

So he munched on. In the great desolate swamp at the spring head of the river was no pure, no potable water, but Tom had brought with him a flask of cold tea. If he had not taken this with him, what would he have done? How could he have gulped down his dry pasty?

Now turning his head over his shoulder, he looked to see what Jenny was doing for lack of water. He couldn't see, because the cart was in the way, so he came up to the cart and peeped cautiously from behind it, and saw that she was quite unable to proceed with a very dry hunch of saffron cake. After some hesitation, he took up a piece of feathery moss, wiped the mouth of his bottle, and went over to the girl, handed it to her with a—'There: pull away; 'tis tea,' and then turned and fled. Ten minutes later he stretched himself, took his scythe, and began to reap down green rushes; and as he reaped he sang:

'Don't y' go a-rushing, maids, in May,
Don't y' go a-rushing, maids, I say.
Don't y' go a-rushing,
Or you'll get a brushing,
Gather up your rushes, and go away.'

He sang defiantly, to show that he was not thinking of Jenny or of any one else.

After he had been engaged some time in

cutting, Jenny came and bound up in bundles the green rushes he had cut, but always at a considerable distance from him, and ever as he went ahead he sang out:

'Don't y' go a-rushing,
Or you 'll get a brushing,
Gather up your rushes, and go away,'

with great emphasis on the *go away.*

At last sufficient had been cut and bound to fill the cart, and then Tom harnessed the grey mare and put her in between the shafts, and drove her along to where lay the little bundles.

Then with a jerk of the chin and a sign with his thumb, Tom indicated to Jenny to get into the cart, which she would not do till she had restored to him his bottle of cold tea, in which was some still left; and of this Tom at once took a pull without wiping the mouth with moss, and then blushed up to the roots of his hair, fearing lest Jenny should have seen him and read the thoughts of his heart, that he was putting his lips where had been hers—and was happy.

All went on very silently, the loading with rushes, and the arranging them in the cart. Tom considered how many 'niches' (bundles) of rushes would be required for the thatch. He had been told, and he now took more lest the thatches should fall short and it would be necessary to come out to the mere for more.

The cart was piled up high, and on the top of the pile of green rushes sat Jenny, by her weight to hold them in place. It was true a rope was slung across, but the 'niches' were so short that it could hardly nip them all. It was necessary that some one should be in the cart to keep them in place. Then 'Gee up, old grey!' called Tom, and they started on the return journey.

All went well for some while, slow indeed, but without accident, so long as the track lay over heather and moss. But when the tracks became deeper and revealed gravel and white lumps of granite, then the oscillation was great, and the voyage attended with danger, not only to the cart, but also to its lading. All at once, down went one wheel on the side opposite to Tom, and he thought the cart and all its contents must capsize.

Quick as thought, he dived under the cart and came up on the farther side, just as the whole pile of rushes tilted over, and with it Jenny, who was on the top. Beyond, at his back, was a bog—profound—treacherous. In the terror of the moment, in his impossibility to escape, Tom remained where he was, held out his arms, and into them fell Jenny, and with her and over her and him poured the green rushes, burying them and almost smothering them.

But with a struggle, up through the rush 'niches' came the two heads of Tom and Jenny; and odd enough to relate, Jenny in her alarm had thrown her arms round Tom's neck, and Tom had Jenny fast in his arms.

'Lor' a-mussy, Jenny!' said Tom.

'Well, I never, Tom!' said Jenny.

The moor folk who had been to Chagford fair, and had seen the circus, the ostriches, the tomahawking Indians, the piebald pony that smoked a pipe and drank beer, and paid sixpence for the privilege, on their return in the evening saw a still more interesting and novel sight, for which they paid nothing. This was none other than Tom and Jenny coming off the moor walking hand in hand, talking to each other so hard that they heard not nor saw the number of people collected on the road to observe them and comment on the sight.

They had been brought together at last, and now could not have enough of each other. The rushes did it.

I knew Tom and Jenny some years later, when Tom and Jenny were no more two, but one flesh; and I never knew, nor could hear tell that they ever had any difference with each other, except over this one thing.

'You know, Jenny,' said Tom, ''twas you jumped into my arms.'

'Now, how can you, Tom!' answered Jenny. 'You went under the cart, so mad was you to catch ho'ud o' me.'

'I—it was the rushes I wor thinking on.'

'And I—I were tum'led down by the rushes.'

'Well,' said Tom—and I was told that the little altercation always concluded in this way—'well, Jenny, there was a power o' folks; there was my sister Joanna, there was that matron to the barrack, there was the cap'n—lor'! they was all of 'em on to bring us together; but they couldn't do it. What mortal men couldn't do, the green rushes did, and say I, and always will say till I dies—the Lord's blessin' be on the green rushes as grows on the moor for bringing us together—as they did.'

BETWEEN THE SIZES.

Should I have been so rudely planned
That nothing ever seems to fit,
If Nature when she took in hand
The work, had giv'n her mind to it?
My boots and hats and gloves, and all
Such things, are never ready-made;
I'm what, I fancy, they would call
'Between the sizes' in the trade.

My social views I cannot square
With those of any other school,
My politics are just as rare
And follow no existing rule;
And when my spirit's deeper needs
Cry out for comfort or control,
I search in vain among the creeds
To suit my solitary soul.

If Nature be alone to blame
That I have been constructed ill,
Must I for ever be the same
And stay 'between the sizes' still?
Or, in some happy future state
From human limitations free,
Will creeds and clothes be out of date,
And will there be a place for me?

C. J. B.

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THE MÉDOC AND ITS WINES.

A visit to the Médoc startles a plain man with a glimpse of his gross ignorance. Probably he has hitherto believed that but two or three clarets (or half-a-dozen at the most) were entitled to bear the sounding prefix of 'Château' upon their pleasant bottles. The truth is so very different. This sunny upland and sloping district on the south bank of the Gironde teems with châteaux. For miles you cannot go a quarter of a mile in any direction without passing or seeing two or three: each with its vineyards and cellars and special labels and reputation of higher or lower degree in the claret-loving world. There is Château-Latour and there is (or there well may be) the Château-Smith. Every one knows about the one. The wines of the other may, on the other hand, go regularly from the vineyards of the Château-Smith by boat to London, and thence arrive at their cobwebby destination in the cellars of the Twickenham villa of Mr John Smith, butcher, baker, draper or what you will. The world wots not of the Château-Smith and its wines, and yet they may have a bouquet and colour that would not disgrace a Château-Margaux or Château-Lafite claret.

It is a gay, warm, opulent region, this of the Médoc. The prevailing colours in September and early October are green and blue and purple. The trees have not yet lost their leaves, nor have the vines taken on their gorgeous tints of decay. The skies are blue, and so are the blouses of the well-nurtured peasants of the land. And the grapes are for the most part ripe or fast ripening. There is much here besides vineyards. Most of the châteaux are extremely desirable country residences, standing in comfortable little parks or with snug farmsteads attached to them. The directory of the district, after mentioning the number of hectares belonging to this or that château, specifies also its number of milking-cows. Shady copses and tracts of pines are also abundant. And there are hedgerows enough by Blanquefort and elsewhere, parting vines from cabbages and cabbages from orchards.

At this season it is just as well to keep one's conscience under lock and key while strolling among the vines. You are naturally not permitted to help yourself to the clusters; yet the temptation is in fact irresistible. On a single plant there may be a dozen burdensome clusters. One or two have broken loose and lie in the furrow. Why, you ask yourself, may you not take one of them? This is the first stage of inevitable theft. Moreover, on the white road which winds between the vineyards (some fenced with oak laths, some with barbed wire, and some quite unfenced), you see many traces of previous larcenies—stripped stalks and the like—ravages committed, probably enough, by representatives of the rough classes of Bordeaux, who drift towards the Médoc at the picking-time as surely as the Whitechapel hoppers take train to Kent in the hop season. They are not loved in the Médoc, these Bordeaux vagabonds, but they have to be endured.

One of the trials of the Médoc are the trains by which it is necessary to journey thither from Bordeaux. Expresses are rare. Your usual luck is a goods-train—to the far end of which a couple of ancient passenger cars are attached. The pace is fearfully slow; the halts are long out of all reason. Eight to ten miles an hour is fair speed in such adventures. But this very slowness gives you admirable opportunity of noticing the landscape and marking the soil of the different vineyards.

There are châteaux in all styles: towered and turreted, semi-feudal in aspect, Renaissance, Palladian, or one-storeyed and homely as the most unpretentious of farmsteads. The majority of them are, sad to say, not used regularly for residential purposes. They are merely appurtenances to the vineyards—pretexts for a label. This or that Bordeaux merchant, Englishman, Russian, or Dutchman, is their fortunate possessor. If the gentleman runs down for two or three days in the vintage-time, it is enough for him. For the rest of the year, the *régisseur* or steward has the run of the place, with its large untenanted rooms, its greensward, chestnut and platane avenues, and bright patches of red geraniums studding the turf of its bijou park. The stately wrought-iron gates which intersect the avenue or main approach to the house are probably rusty from disuse.

But if the château is dull and rather depressing in itself, there is life enough round it. Here in snug little houses dwell the retainers, the men who pick the grapes, carry and press them, and do the other work with a skill and caution that shall not imperil the reputation of this particular label. And there is a portly (even majestic) *chef des caves*, if the château is famous, who lends dignity to the wine he is so happy to show to the accredited visitor. As a spectacle, however, there is nothing exciting about the cellars and warehouses attached to the château. There is little or no old wine here. That has long since gone into private hands. The fluid you are invited to taste is merely a 'Grand Ordinaire,' which, in spite of the Médoc wine's gift of rapid development, cannot be expected to excite your palate inordinately. A course of château visiting tends to stomach-aches rather than ecstatic exhilaration.

Only by a journey to the very head of the long promontory between the Atlantic and the Gironde can one form an idea of the prodigious quantity of the Médoc wines. For fifty miles you are never quite out of sight of vineyards. Here and there they absorb the horizon on both sides. They are strikingly different in quality, however, as has been said. A patch of wizened, shrivelled plants, with few leaves and no alluring clusters, may be seen absolutely contiguous to a vineyard full of fine healthy fruit. It is of course an affair of cultivation and soil. Like other things, the Médoc grape responds eagerly to loving care. You may have plants of first-class pedigree and the soil that suits them best, and yet fail to produce a distinguished wine, if your cultivators are not of as good quality as your plants. Like hops in England, the vines are most sensitive to human attention. One marvels a little at the apparently rude nature of the soil to the vines on which labels with famous names are affixed. But the truth is the Médoc vine does not want to be excessively pampered. Give it a good rough gravelly soil, with a fair proportion of sand underneath (for superfluous rains to vanish readily into), and it will be as grateful to you as it well knows how to be. A gravelly subsoil yields wine remarkable for delicacy; but if there be a preponderance of stones in the subsoil, the wine will be strong rather than delicate, appealing to the brain more than to the palate.

Approximately, one-fifth of the area of the department of the Gironde is devoted to vine-growing, and the proportion is constantly on the increase. No wonder the whole district gets to some extent excited as the time for the harvest arrives. There have been perils enough to face from spring to autumn, but these got through, and the goal nearly achieved, the blow is felt the more if it happens, as it sometimes does, that very heavy rains or even hail-storms descend upon the ripe grapes and burst them by the million where they hang apparently begging to be picked and pressed. Science can do much nowadays to help the vine-growers to combat the various ailments and insect pests which attack the plants. There are scores of preparations of sulphur and insecticide powders; and while women and children are turned loose in the rows to gather the epicurean snails which feast on the leaves, poultry also play their part of protectors in eating the caterpillars and other small fry. Frost is less easily fought; yet that also is frustrated to some extent. But the occasional downpours of autumn are irresistible. The grower can only fold his arms and hope the damage will be little rather than great.

The claret grapes compare very favourably for size with those of the Champagne district. One is tempted much more in the Médoc than in the Marne valley. But, on the other hand, the Bordeaux cellars do not engross like those of Rheims and Epernay. Claret, in fact, matures for the market less sensationally than champagne. One does not here in Bordeaux go among the bottles half expectant of a bombardment, or see any of the litter of broken glass and corks which in a Rheims cellar often hint at the force so strongly imprisoned on both hands. Nor is it, as has been suggested, much of a pleasure to drink a glass of comparatively new claret (howsoever fine a wine) among the barrels and cobwebs of a Bordeaux cellar, with the portly cellarman looking on and awaiting what he is innocent enough to call your judgment. At Rheims, even a tyro in tasting may praise indiscriminately, and be sure he is not betraying his ignorance. But claret varies vastly with the vintage; and none but an expert and accomplished palate may dare to say what is good, what is bad, and what is mediocre.

The cobwebs will seem to an impressionable visitor the noblest things in the Bordeaux cellars. Some of them look like thick pile curtains, sombre in hue, of course, but famously suggestive of warmth. And with even only a moderate imagination, one may go to and fro among the barrels fancying the pendent shapes overhead are dusky stalactites instead of the airy next-to-nothings they really are. If you hold your candle high enough, you may shrivel a few yards of the fabric. But that were truly a shocking deed of vandalism, for, though no layman can understand why this dismal tapestry is reverenced as it is, his ignorance will not be held sufficient excuse for his crime.

It is well, after seeing vineyards and cellars, to recur to the quays of Bordeaux herself, and then look around and mark the magnitude of some of the city's finest mercantile houses. Only thus is it possible to guess at the mighty influence of claret. The river Gironde is not in itself a very engaging stream hereabouts. Its colour is always pea-soupy, and it is not dominated by anything in the nature of mountains. But it looks on many enchanting country residences which owe their foundation stones to claret, and on its turbid bosom it bears many ships to the metropolis of French wines. Few cities have so kindly a repute as Bordeaux—a repute also ascribable to claret. Of course, however, something depends upon the vintage of the year. No reasonable man will expect a merchant to show him as cheerful a countenance of welcome in 1892, for example, as in 1893, when coopers made fortunes in the demand for barrels to accommodate the wine of a phenomenal season.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XXIV.—A DEFENDER IN DESPAIR.

The Endoza brougham had just rolled away from the Daltons'.

'Ah, my dear child,' said Miss Bryne, shaking her head. 'She is light and gay, and perhaps a trifle frivolous to you, but she loves you, Rénée, and her manners are natural to her and the climate from which she comes.'

'Perhaps so, aunt, but I begin to be very weary of Isabel and her sweet, sickly ways.'

'Oh, don't say that, my dear. You see she has missed for years that which you have enjoyed, the guardianship of one who has always tried to play a mother's part.'

'You have always been loving and tender to me, aunt, dear,' said Rénée, kissing affectionately the slightly withered cheek nearest to her.

'Thank you, my dear,' said Miss Bryne, responding to the loving embrace; and a faint colour appeared in her cheek which might have been due to Rénée's kiss, only that the same hue blossomed in the other, as she went on: 'If dear little Isabel had some one motherly always near her, she would be very different. You see,' she added hastily, as if in dread that her niece should give her words a meaning, 'we must not judge Isabel by our standard. Of course she has been highly educated here, but she comes from a country rising out of barbarism. The things which jar upon us spoiled people of fashion are only the pristine innocency of her nature, and remind me of the playful gambols of a very young cat—I might say kitten. Really, Rénée, I love her very dearly.'

There was silence in the drawing-room at South Audley Street for a few minutes, during which Rénée sat very sad and thoughtful, and she suddenly awoke to the fact that her aunt was gazing at her pensively.

Rénée started and coloured, and Miss Bryne shook her head meaningly.

'Ah, my dear,' she said, 'I wish I could see you look happier.'

'Pray, pray, my dear aunt, say no more.'

'I must, my dear, for every one's sake.'

Rénée made a gesture full of despair, and then resigned herself to her fate.

'I think a great deal about some one and his sufferings, my child, and I think a great deal about you, for you are verging, my darling, you are indeed.'

'Oh, aunt!' cried Rénée, half in vexation, half in despair; and Miss Bryne's tongue went softly on.

'I think so much of you, my darling, and compare you so with myself—when I was about your age. For I will not attempt to deceive you, my dear: it is nothing to be ashamed of. There was once a little episode in my life which kept me single up till now.'

'Indeed, aunt!' said Rénée, glad to receive the small mercy of her aunt talking about herself, instead of some one else.

'Yes, my dear. It is verging, I know, to speak about it, but you can think and feel now; and there is no harm in my confiding the little trouble to you. He was an officer, my dear—a fine, tall, gallant-looking fellow—it was when we were living at Canterbury—and he used to pass our house regularly with his men, and at last he used to bow to me.'

'Aunt,' said Rénée, with a sad smile, 'I never knew that you had so much romance in your life.'

'No, my dear, I suppose not; but most ladies have some sprigs of dried lavender hidden away, only making their presence known by their perfume; and you, dearest, are beginning to dry some up for the future. Heigho!'

Rénée frowned, but said nothing, and her aunt went on bringing out her own particular sprig to inhale its scent.

'Then he went out to India with a draft, my dear, and he must have been killed, poor fellow, for I never saw him again.'

'But you would certainly have heard, aunt,' said Rénée, interested now in the tiny bit of sentiment in spite of herself.

'No, my darling: I never heard,' said the lady, wiping away a tear.

'Poor auntie!' said Rénée, affectionately laying a white soft hand upon one showing the throbbing veins through the skin.

'Thank you, my dear. It changed the current of my early life, for I clung to the hope that he would return some day, and pass once more and bow. But he never did, and he must have fallen somewhere beneath the torrid sun.'

'But, aunt dear, the despatches would certainly have given his name if he had been killed: they always do. Did you inquire or search?'

'No, my love. I never knew his name.'

'Never knew his name!' said Rénée, with a curious look of perplexity on her brow.

'No, my dear; we never spoke: we only bowed—only bowed? We loved, I am sure: I could read it in his eyes, as he passed before me the last time, onward to his death, for he must have been slain by some cruel Afghan or Sikh. But I felt that he loved me: I know he did, and—— Dear me, who's that?'

'Only me, aunt,' said Brant, entering hastily, and making Miss Bryne jump. 'Ah, Rénée, how are you?'

'Quite well, Brant,' said Rénée gravely; and then she looked again at her cousin's disturbed face.

'Why, Brant, my dear boy, what is it?' cried Miss Bryne. 'Rénée, dear, touch the bell for some fresh tea: the poor fellow looks quite worn out.'

'Tea!' echoed Brant with a hoarse melodramatic laugh. 'I feel as if I want a draught of boiling brandy, or something stronger than that.'

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'Gracious me, child! What is the matter?' cried Miss Bryne. 'No bad news?'

'News? I don't call it news. It's horrible! I feel as if it were all some cursed nightmare, or a delirious dream.'

'Brant, dear, you turn me quite faint,' cried Miss Bryne. 'Speak out at once, I beg of you.'

'Oh, all right,' he said; 'you must know, but you had better go away, Rénée, my dear. I don't want to hurt your feelings, knowing what your ideas are.'

Miss Bryne uttered a wild cry.

'I know—I know!' she cried, gesticulating with her hands.

'Do you! Then don't you think Rén had better go?'

'Yes—yes—yes.—Pray, pray, go, my dear,' she cried; but Rénée's brows contracted, and though her hands trembled she kept her seat.

'Do you hear, Rén; you'd better go,' said Brant.

'No: I will stay,' she said firmly.

'Oh, do go, before he tells us, my darling,' cried her aunt. 'Did—did you send for Dr Kilpatrick, Brant?'

'Send for him? No!'

'I don't like him, but he is clever.—Rénée, my darling, do go. I felt a presentiment that something was going to happen. Do pray go before he tells us Mr Wynyan has been caught by one of the wheels at the works and crushed to death.'

'I wish to goodness he had been!' roared Brant, as Rénée turned pale as death, and seemed about to fall from her seat.

'What; isn't it that?' came to her through the singing noise in her ears.

'Bah! No. A scoundrel—a cursed scoundrel!'

'Not taken away the cash-box, Brant?'

'Aunt, don't be such an old——goose!' cried Brant. 'It's worse than that—ten times worse.'

'Oh, my dear, then what is it?' cried Miss Bryne.

'We've found him out at last—at least the government has,' said Brant hoarsely, as he avoided his cousin's eyes, which seemed to be looking him through and through.

'Oh, my dear, thorns are nothing to it,' cried Miss Bryne; 'pray, pray, tell us the worst.'

'Well, I suppose I must,' said Brant, 'if Rénée won't go. She has to hear it sooner or later, and sooner hurts least. Shall I go on, Rén?'

'Yes; tell me everything.'

'Well, you know of uncle's great invention?'

'Yes, my dear,' said Miss Bryne.

'He has sold us.'

'I don't know what you mean, Brant, my dear; but it must be very dreadful, I'm sure. Pray, pray, speak.'

'It was a secret, of course, sold to our government, and that scoundrel Wynyan copied the plans and drawings, and sold them to some foreign power.'

'Who dares say that?' cried Rénée, rising with her eyes flashing. 'It is not true.'

'Government says it,' cried Brant, producing the official letter. 'I don't ask you to believe me. Read for yourself.'

'I cannot; I will not,' cried Rénée. 'Mr Wynyan is a true gentleman, and could not be guilty of such a treacherous act.'

'Then why did he steal the plans away from the office safe, and keep them for a week?'

'Mr Wynyan did not, could not,' cried Rénée.

'Very well. Don't believe it, then. All I know is, that he brought them back to me. Hamber was in there, and he owned to bringing them back himself.'

'And what will happen, now, Brant?' cried Miss Bryne.

'Happen? That it's all up for good, and we are going to the dogs.'

'No, aunt,' cried Rénée quietly; and she turned a scornful look on her cousin. 'Brant has some grounds, perhaps, for making such a charge; but as far as Mr Wynyan is concerned, not a word is true.'

(*To be continued.*)

COTTON-SEED OIL.

THE cotton-seed oil industry, though it can boast but a comparatively recent origin, bids fair to attain to great importance. As the name of this product implies, it is the oil obtained by crushing the seeds of the cotton plant. Probably cotton-seed oil has always been known to cotton producers; but it is only within the last twenty years that even an eminently practical people like the cotton farmers of the United States have realised the commercial possibilities of the product. Before the great civil war occurred between the Northern and the Southern States, the Texas and South Carolina planters had hardly heard of this oil. New conditions, however, prevailed with the advent of peace. Great Britain was not so dependent upon the United States for her cotton supplies as she had been. The Southern planters, too, had to work on the most economical lines possible, and thus cotton products regarded during the 'ante-bellum days' as of no account, were carefully utilised. Still, cotton-seed oil made slow progress, and the year 1867 saw only some four mills for crushing the seed in the United States. At the close of last year, however, the number had increased to two hundred and fifty-three, of which no fewer than twenty-seven are in South Carolina.

England, too, has a big share of this oil business. Whole cargoes of cotton seed, frequently in bulk, are brought to this country, principally from Alexandria. The United States used to send us vast quantities of this seed. She now does so no longer, crushing the seed and manufacturing the various products derived from it herself. Hull is the principal port to which these consignments of Egyptian and Brazilian cotton seed find their way, the manufacture of vegetable oils being a very important one at the Humberside town. It is well known that the raw cotton of commerce is the fluffy or downy fibre surrounding the seeds of the cotton plant. When the cotton is picked and the seeds excluded, it is only to be expected that some portion of the fibre remains attached to the seeds. Before the seeds are crushed, this has to be carefully removed. The process is aptly described as delinting, and the lint or cotton picked off in the process, though short in the staple, is extremely fine and silky to the touch, and has a high commercial value, being especially sought after by manufacturers of gun-cotton.

No portion of the seed is wasted. Formerly, the hulls or shells were regarded as possessing no commercial value, and were merely used as fuel. Now, however, it has been amply demonstrated that fuel of this description is extremely costly. They are largely used as cattle food, being mixed for that purpose with the cotton meal, the crushed kernel of the cotton seed. Formerly, the seed meal used to be almost wholly exported to Great Britain or the Continent of Europe, where its efficacy as a cattle fattener has long been duly recognised. Much, however, of the seed meal is now despatched from the cotton areas to the towns or cattle-raising centres of the north and west of the United States; while another considerable portion of the output is returned to the land, mixed with phosphates as a fertiliser, to promote the growth of future cotton crops.

Strange as it may seem, the oil manufactured in England is held superior to that produced in the United States, on account of its greater clearness and better colour. But where even ordinary care is taken in the manufacturing process, the resultant product is an extremely attractive and wholesome vegetable oil. Among the inhabitants of the United States, where conservatism in old-established customs does not obtain to the same extent as in England, cotton-seed oil is rapidly achieving popularity. Many housewives prefer it in their culinary processes to lards and animal fats of a like nature and an equally dubious origin. In fact, cotton-seed oil enters very largely into the composition of many of the compounds usually denominated 'lard.'

In England, when an attempt was made some years ago to popularise the product, the effort failed, the want of success being largely due, it is said, to the uncleanly methods of a certain class of public caterers, who were by no means slow to recognise the suitability of the new oil for the requirements of their own particular business. There are in London, and most provincial towns as well, institutions rejoicing in the suggestive name of 'Fried-fish shops,' or 'Fried-fish establishments.' The enterprising caterers who thus minister to the requirements of a large section of the lower stratum of society in the matter of a fried-fish diet, are much addicted to the use of cotton-seed oil as the oleaginous medium in which they fry their fish. Now the oil itself is wholesome and odourless, and possesses not a single objectionable property, and is capitally suited for this purpose. Unfortunately, however, the profits attached to the running of a fried-fish establishment are not of the colossal order. Competition, too, in this walk of life is keen, and thus rigorous economy is absolutely necessary. Thus the oil employed is utilised again and again, and hence the combination of ancient and fish-like smells, which compels the wayfarer to protect his olfactory nerves from their contact. In spite, however, of the bad odour into which cotton-seed oil has fallen on this account, it is slowly but surely gaining popular favour. 'Cottolene,' a lard-like preparation from the oil, is stated by those who have tried it, to be quite equal to the ordinary lard of domestic use.

Much of the oil manufactured in the States is exported to the various Mediterranean ports, more especially to Marseilles, Genoa, and Naples. It is not difficult to tell what becomes of it. Some of it is, of course, used by the poorer classes as a substitute for the dearer olive-oil. The bulk of it, however, is sold as that article, being first of all mixed with olive-oil, or else 'prepared,' and then sold right out as olive-oil. But the inhabitants of the United States do not escape all consequences from the trade fraud which, innocently or otherwise, they are the means of perpetrating upon the citizens of Italy or the countries adjacent. The population of the great North American Republic includes many subjects who claim Italy, France, or Spain as the land of their birth. They are large consumers of olive-oil, and that from their fatherland is of course the best. Sad, however, to relate, much of the olive-oil exported from Marseilles, Genoa, or Naples to the United States is just cotton-seed oil, shipped originally from North American ports, doctored a little, perhaps, up the Mediterranean, and then sent back as the product of native olive yards.

Much cotton-seed oil is also exported to Antwerp, some of the vessels engaged in carrying it having been specially built, much on the lines of a petroleum tanker, to carry the oil in bulk. Dutch and Belgian enterprise has discovered dozens of methods in which cotton-seed oil may be utilised, and it is an open secret that it enters very largely into the composition of a variety of products, whose principal constituents are generally supposed to be animal fat.

Regrettable as these frauds may be, they serve to indicate the usefulness of the oil as a food-stuff. When the public recognition of this fact increases, cotton-seed oil products will be better able to stand upon their own merits, and there will no longer be the necessity or temptation to disguise this useful article of food under other names. The future which awaits the oil industry is certainly a great one. It is already an important factor in determining the income of the cotton-planter, and while the staple itself continues at its present price, must be of the greatest importance to him. The mills pay well, and the twenty-seven crushing establishments situated in South Carolina dealt in 1894 with no less than seventy-five thousand tons of seed, valued at eight hundred thousand dollars. From this seed sixty thousand barrels of oil, twenty-six thousand tons of cotton-seed meal, five thousand bales of linters—the fine cotton attached to the seed—and twenty-five thousand tons of hulls were obtained. And yet it is not many years ago that the commercial value of cotton seed, apart from its use in propagating its kind, was almost entirely unsuspected.

THE MYSTERY OF THE GOLDEN LLAMA.

CHAPTER IV.—THE NARRATIVE.

SEARCH as I would, I could find no trace of the golden llama. It had been in its place on my writing-table on the previous morning, when I started for my long walk. Of that I felt assured. How and when and by whom had it been removed? That it was valuable—valuable as mere bullion, apart from its antiquarian interest—I knew full well; but who was there, knowing of its existence and of its value, who should come to the lodgings in Kennington to steal it from my writing-table? No one had visited me in my new quarters. It was the general impression, I believe—and I had not attempted to remove it—that I had gone into the country for a few weeks' holiday. Who was there, then, who should have stolen the golden llama?

Gradually, but irresistibly, the conviction forced itself upon me that the thief could be no other than Miss M'Rae herself. Her demeanour that night, when I encountered her on the stairs, her avoidance of me, her evident fright, and the boldness with which she sought to cover it—all spoke to me of guilt. True, she was intoxicated; but was that sufficient in itself to account for the strangeness of her behaviour? Too late, I regretted the carelessness with which I had exposed my priceless treasure to the eyes of one whom I had already discovered to be untrustworthy.

I attended the inquest on the body of my late landlady in the hope that some clew might be dropped in the course of the inquiry which would lead me to the recovery of that which I had lost. I followed all the evidence—it was but scanty—with minute care, plied the witnesses (after the inevitable verdict of self-destruction had been hurriedly pronounced) with further questions bearing on the point I had in view; but all my investigation was fruitless. The unfortunate woman had been seen loitering in the neighbourhood of a pawnbroker's shop, an hour or two before her death, had been seen, in fact, gazing through the open shop-door—so much I ascertained; but my anxious inquiry at the shop in question was met with the reply that nothing resembling my missing property had been offered in pledge on that night.

And so the second tragedy passed away and was buried, like its victim, in the common, nameless grave of the Forgotten; and I went back once more to take up my abode in the house where the golden llama had first encountered my sight.

I had resigned all hope of seeing it again. The police had made inquiries; a description of it had been circulated; all was of no avail. At last the idea occurred to me of inserting an advertisement in the daily papers. I had but little hope that it would bring me tidings of the missing object; but I felt that even its insertion would be a satisfaction to me.

Within a couple of days it appeared—a brief, tersely-worded advertisement, addressed to 'pawnbrokers and others,' offering a handsome reward to any one who should give me information of the whereabouts of an ancient gilt figure (which I described) supposed to represent a llama, which had been taken from a house in Southampton Terrace, Kennington, on or about the twenty-first of March.

On the very day of its publication it brought me a visitor.

He was announced to me by Mrs Placer as 'a gentleman calling himself Professor Pardoe—an elderly gentleman, if you please, sir—who wants to see you not very particular; but would be glad of a minute, if you could spare it, sir.' On my acquiescence, he was shown into the room. The professor was a little, stout man, with snow-white hair that curled over the collar of his frock-coat, a very ruddy face, and twinkling gray eyes that beamed benignantly through gold-rimmed spectacles. They beamed all the more, I daresay, because he felt some awkwardness in the nature of his visit.

He began by profusely apologising for it.

'I trust I do not interrupt you at a busy moment, my dear sir? It is only an instant that I need detain you. My mission is very trivial—all too trivial, I fear, to justify my intrusion. At the same time, I could not deny myself the pleasure of satisfying a somewhat unwarrantable curiosity respecting an advertisement which appeared above your name in this morning's *Times*.'

My attention was riveted in an instant.

'Your name is not unknown to me,' my voluble visitor continued, 'although I have never had the pleasure of conversing with you. It was brought before my notice some twelve months since in a very lamentable connection—in connection with the proceedings relative to the death of my dear friend Almirez.'

'You knew Señor Almirez?' I ejaculated. In the same instant his name came back to me. Almirez had spoken more than once of Professor Pardoe, a friend and somewhat of a rival of his in his earlier days of travel, since become a scientific writer of some note.

'Undoubtedly! I was sure that I could not be mistaken. Your name was familiar to me at once. It was this coincidence—the coincidence of the person who had lost this curious object, described in the advertisement, being the friend of *my* friend—that led me to pay you this very impertinent and intrusive visit. And now, my dear sir, I am going to be still more impertinent. I am going to ask you some questions.'

And the stout little gentleman leaned back comfortably in his chair, beaming upon me with benign effulgence.

'In the first place, I am going to ask you, was this given to you by Almirez? Of course it was! I can see it by your face. Could you describe it to me? I have the advertisement here'—touching his pocket—'but could you give me any further particulars about the "gilt figure supposed to represent a llama?" I ask with a purpose.'

What his purpose could possibly be, I was at a loss to imagine; but his manner of asking the questions was so unaffected, so entirely free from being merely inquisitive or aggressive, that I willingly entered into a fairly minute description of the golden llama. As I proceeded, the professor's genial face began to assume a puzzled, wondering look, and his eyes turned musingly towards the floor. When I had finished he spoke again.

'Was this in Almirez' possession at the time of his death, can you tell me? or had he—— Believe me, my dear sir,' he broke off suddenly, into a tone of great earnestness, 'these are no idle questions. There is, there may be, some mischief in this matter, some terrible mystery that you and I can hardly dream of. I cannot tell yet. It may all depend upon your answer to my question—was this image in Almirez' possession on the day of his death?'

I told him everything—told him how Almirez had given it to me, how I had returned it to his room, how it had been found after his death. For some moments after I had finished speaking, the professor sat quite still, his face clouded over with some great brooding trouble, his lips murmuring inarticulately.

'Strange, strange!' I heard him mutter.

At last he roused himself.

'How did you come to lose it?' he said simply. 'What happened?'

It was soon told. I had lost it—had it stolen from my rooms—on the anniversary of Almirez' death. I could only suspect my landlady, whom I had already found out to be untrustworthy. On the night when the golden llama disappeared, she had left the house in a strange manner, and some hours afterwards, apparently in a fit of drunken remorse, she had thrown herself into the Thames.

As I mentioned the fact of Miss M'Rae's tragic death, the professor sprang up from his chair excitedly.

'A second suicide!' he almost shouted. 'And on the same day!'

What could his conduct mean? Somewhat irritably, I am afraid, I asked him to explain himself. He was pacing up and down the room, with his brows knit and his hands clasped nervously behind him. Suddenly he paused in his walk and turned towards me; but, in place of answering my question, he asked me yet another.

'You have heard nothing of this thing since —do not know where it is now?' he asked.

Very decidedly I answered in the negative, and then repeated my former question, but for some time it met with no response. Gradually, however, the professor's stride slackened; his hands loosened and dropped to his sides; and at last he seated himself once more in the chair opposite my own and fixed his eyes searchingly upon my face.

'What I am about to confide to you, my dear sir,' he began, 'is but suspicion; but suspicion so striking, so positive, that to my mind at least it has the force of certainty. Were it not so, I would have kept silence. I have told you that I was a friend of Juan Almirez. Month after month in days gone by we have lived together in the same hunting-camp or been engaged together on the same expedition. I was his senior by many years; yet I was able to admire to the full his impetuous energy, his indomitable fixity of purpose. I have told you also that I was immediately struck by the coincidence that you, a friend of Almirez, had lost the golden figure of which you have given me a description. I will tell you now that that description answers minutely to the description of an ancient sacred symbol which was stolen from the natives of a little Peruvian village in Sierra at a time when Almirez and I were pursuing historical researches in the neighbourhood. Further, that Almirez was strongly suspected—though at the time I thought unjustly—of being the thief.'

The professor paused, and I intervened in defence of my dead friend.

'You will allow me to say that your conclusion seems a trifle hasty? There is nothing, I take it, very distinctive or peculiar in the figure given to me by Almirez. Why, then, should you assume against him so readily that he could be guilty of such an act?'

'You are right, my dear young sir,' the professor replied blandly. 'There *is* nothing very distinctive about it. There may be—I daresay there are—a dozen or more of such figures in existence, all of which answer more or less to the description of the stolen image. But there were other reasons—reasons depending on matters which you have disclosed to me in the course of our conversation this afternoon—which led me irresistibly to form the assumption which you so deprecate. Almirez had a special motive for desiring to possess himself of this particular thing. There was a curious tale that was told of it by the natives, a curious superstition attaching to it, that roused all his passion for the acquisition of strange and wonderful objects. How strong was his desire to possess himself of it—to test the truth of the superstition, as he grimly said—I know from conversation that I have held with him; I know also how high a price he offered for it, and how the natives, in horror at the suggestion, refused his overtures. The tale was this. Long years ago, in the evil days that followed the Spanish conquest and the death of Francisco Pizarro, a band of Spanish brigand-soldiers burst into the little village. It was the morning of the great festival of the spring equinox, and all the folk were gathered in the Temple of the Sun. Thither the soldiers ran. It was the old tale of quest for hidden booty, of outraged Christianity whose indignation could only be appeased by gold. They seized the priest, as he stood offering sacrifice, and demanded that the idolatrous treasure of the temple should be given up to them. But no treasure was to be found—perhaps it had gone towards the ransom of the Inca or been plundered in an earlier raid—and, refusing to disclose any hiding-place of wealth, the aged priest was put to the torture. In the extremity of his anguish he pointed out to his tormentors the spot where the sole remaining treasure of the temple lay buried, but added, so they say, these fateful words: "In whose hand shall be found the sacred llama of the Sun, by his hand shall he fall this day!" The soldiers unearthed the treasure; and, enraged at its meanness, they put the priest to death. Then, the story goes, they fell to gaming; and the captain, who had taken possession of the treasure, lost heavily and slew himself before nightfall. What happened to the sacred llama in the long years that followed is unrecorded; but in our days at least it had come back into the possession of the natives of the village, who, though nominally Christians, retained much unacknowledged sympathy with their ancient worship. Along with the sacred figure a superstition had survived—the superstition that it should prove fatal to its owner, whosoever he might be, on the day of the spring equinox. Accordingly, it had always been the custom in the early days of March for a procession to go forth, bearing the golden llama, to the site of the ancient temple of the Sun, and there with much ceremony to inter it among the ruins; nor was it disinterred or touched again until the month of March was passed over. It was during one of these periods of its interment (when, as I have said, Almirez and I were camping in the neighbourhood) that it was stolen. When the day arrived on which it should be exhumed, the procession mounted the steep path that led to the ruined temple; but the men returned horror-struck. The ground had been newly broken and the sacred figure removed. There were circumstances undoubtedly which pointed to Almirez as having been the guilty man; but I refused to believe it. I can only say now that my belief has suffered change.'

Towards the close of the professor's long speech a horrible idea had been shaping itself within my mind.

'Do you mean to say—that you believe Almirez' death—in any way'—— I began.

'Who shall say?' he replied. 'We know the facts. Who will be so bold as to draw the inference from them? And yet *his* death, the death of your landlady—both on the same day, both on the day of the spring equinox—both dead by their own hand! Of course one can advance arguments: his superstitious terror, confronted suddenly on that night of all nights by the object which he thought he had safely disposed of; her guilty shame, weighing her down with the intolerable sense of crime and the instant fear of detection. It may have been so. One hopes it may have been so. And yet, my dear sir, fool or lunatic as you may think me, I will freely confess to you that my mind will know no ease until this accursed image has been once more returned to a position where its fateful influence can wreak no harm.'

. . . . . .

Years have rolled by, and I have heard no more of it. Many months since Professor Pardoe was laid in an honoured grave. I remain the sole witness of the strange facts that I have related. Whether I really believe in the professor's ghastly explanation, I hardly know myself; but I know that it is a relief to me to think, and to believe, that the rolling tide of the river, when it closed that night over the head of the unhappy woman, buried for ever in its sludgy bed the mystery of the golden llama.

CAVALRY ON THE LINE OF MARCH.

In the hope that it may prove of interest to non-military readers to know something about the way in which a cavalry regiment is transported from one garrison town to another, I will describe shortly what was at once the longest and most arduous march out of many which I shared in during nine years' service in a Lancer regiment in England and Ireland. It is now some years ago that the —th were quartered in Woolwich, and the 'route'—as the order to march is technically termed—came one afternoon for us to start the next morning for York.

The entire regiment does not march in one body, but goes piecemeal, a squadron (a fourth) at a time. The second party starts two days after the first, and so on. Sick men, recruits, and a few others go by train.

Each squadron is preceded on the road by a billeting-party, consisting of two sergeants and their batmen. These set out on the afternoon before their main body. On entering the appointed town, they repair to the police-station and secure their own billet. They go round to various inns the next morning in the company of a policeman, placing as many men and horses together as possible, with a non-commissioned-officer in charge, till the whole are provided for. It is a rule that a man and his horse must not be more than a quarter of a mile apart. When the troops arrive, about midday, they are met by the billeting-sergeants, who distribute the 'billets' amongst them. The remainder of the day is devoted to grooming horses and cleaning kits.

In the evening, the sergeant-major visits all the billets to pay accounts. These are: for a horse 1s. 9d., for a man 1s. 4d. per day; in return for 8 lb. of straw, 12 lb. of hay, and 10 lb. of corn for the former; for the latter, lodging and dinner, the only meal officially recognised, consisting of steak, vegetables, pepper, salt, and vinegar, a pint of small beer, and a pennyworth of bread.

To the uninitiated, it must seem a mystery how a man could travel and subsist on the fare provided for him by government, as above described; but it should be stated that when on the march a man receives his full pay of 1s. 2d. per day, and this is supposed to provide in some occult way for the two or three extra meals which it will easily be understood he is able to dispose of. But that is not all.

If the British tax-payer grumbles at the direct inroads on his pocket in the shape of army estimates, he is always ready to open his heart and his purse for Tommy Atkins in person, on the march; and the soldier who does not have a good time then, owing to this fact, has either very hard luck or 'only has himself to blame.' From the first to the last of our halting-places, the experience of my chums and myself was of the happy order. The publicans were kind to us and generous in the matter of additional fare gratis, and the company at night invariably very liberal. The presence of soldiers in a smoke-room is naturally an attraction to civilians. Could there be surroundings more conducive to the spinning of yarns, or a more trustful, sympathetic audience? For the soldier does spin yarns, with the very remote possibility of there being any one in a position to challenge or contradict them. And when his own stock runs short, his chum plays into his hands by reminding him of what happened to Brown, Jones, or Robinson of the Greys, the Bays, the King's or what not. To tell the truth, there is very little need of romancing. Amongst four hundred men of all sorts and conditions there is continually happening a variety of incidents, grave or gay, of never-failing interest to an ordinary smoke-room company.

Having despatched the billeting-party, I left Woolwich with the first squadron, consisting of about fifty men and sixty horses, ten men leading the spare horses; our first day's march being to Edmonton. Through London, and especially in the City, our pace was slow, a sort of triumphal progress—the cynosure of all eyes, attended by a large contingent of admirers, mostly boys and idlers, some of the former following us for miles; while two of the latter accompanied us to Edmonton and there and then desired to enlist. Our appearance, arms, &c. were freely criticised, and the wildest speculations were indulged in anent our destination, caused, as we afterwards discovered, by a joker in the advanced guard, who gave out that we were bound for the docks, *en route* for a foreign land, at that time the theatre of war. Owing to the intense cold, we were cloaked, and very glad indeed to reach the hospitable inns of Edmonton.

The next instalment of the journey was to Ware. Now, the pleasantness or otherwise of a march is in great measure dependent upon the officer in charge, and we looked forward to a good time, owing to the reputation of our captain in this respect. When about two miles out of Edmonton, we halted for a few moments to tighten girths, &c. On remounting we had a smart trot for a mile or two, dropped again into a walk, and then came the order 'Ride at ease: singers to the front.' On that day there was not a happier squadron in the British Army than ours, despite the cold, and we looked forward to a rare good time. But trouble was in store for us of a kind we little anticipated.

The next march was to Royston, and while we were parading in the morning preparatory to setting out, nearly frozen as we sat, flakes of snow fell ominously—few and small at first, but gradually increasing until it became a furious snow-storm, blinding both horses and men, and causing us the greatest difficulty in controlling the frightened animals, as the bitter north-east wind drove it into our faces and prevented us seeing more than a few yards ahead. We were stiff and benumbed with cold on arriving at Royston. 'Riding at ease' was no amelioration—riding in any sort of order was almost impossible; singers were entirely out of it; and altogether that day's march was the cruellest I ever experienced. The following day the snowfall continued, and subsequently lessened the cold, but we marched to Huntingdon and Peterborough up to the horses' knees in snow.

From Peterborough to Bourne, to Grantham and to Newark, our progress was almost as bad. True, the snowfall had ceased, but now the roads were sheets of ice and frozen snow; and the horses, blinded and frightened before, were now scarcely less terrified by their inability to secure a foothold, and, though rough-shod, they slipped, stumbled, and trembled in every limb.

The next stages, to Retford and Doncaster, proved of much the same character; but on that from Doncaster to Selby the elements were much less inclement, and again the voice of the singer was heard in the land, though I was fated to be out of it. I had the ill-luck to be told off to ride my own horse and lead another that was said to have fallen lame; and in order that there might be no delay, I started an hour before the squadron. Up to then, I *had* had the companionship of my comrades, but now I was to go by myself and lead this lame or lazy horse. I nearly dislocated first one arm and then the other by trying to pull him along; but when I found he was active and game enough in hanging back, or going any way but ahead, I got angry and began to doubt his *bonâ fides;* and on the arrival upon the scene of a farmer, driving a horse and trap towards Selby, I stated the case to him, and at once enlisted his sympathy and practical aid. He agreed to drive behind us, and when my equine friend evinced a desire to turn rusty, the application of the whip soon caused him to forget his feigned lameness; with the result that, instead of the squadron just catching me up at Selby, I got in before them, and for my pains and cleverness got a good wigging from the officer for overworking a lame horse!

The final journey from Selby into the stately capital of the north passed without incident, and brought our thirteen days' pilgrimage to an end.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

The most interesting of the papers brought before the recent International Geographical Congress was that read by Mr C. E. Borchgrevink, giving particulars of his remarkable voyage to that mysterious great southern continent which, fifty-four years ago, was named in honour of Her Majesty the Queen, Victoria Land. Some geographers have estimated the size of this continent—about which nothing whatever is known save that it is not a myth—at twice the size of Europe, and it is not surprising therefore that much interest should attach to such an extensive *terra incognita*. The author of the paper in question is a young Norwegian who joined the steam whaler *Antarctic* as a sailor before the mast; otherwise, he tells us, he could not have gone at all. But although he was unable to burden himself with many instruments, he made frequent observations, the results of which were embodied in the paper read before the Geographical Congress. The ship left Melbourne just one year ago (September 20, 1894), and a month later the first snow was seen. The *Aurora Australis* was visible almost nightly, and the intensity of the light culminated every five minutes. At the beginning of November a chain of icebergs extending for about fifty miles in length was encountered, the ice-hills being about six hundred feet high, with perpendicular sides. Multitudes of marine animals and birds were met with, and several seals were shot. Eventually in January they landed at Cape Adair, Victoria Land, which is described as a large square basaltic rock, nearly four thousand feet in height. The reading of this paper led to the formal adoption by the congress of a resolution that a completely equipped scientific expedition should be sent to the regions of the South Pole, and it is probable that the government will be asked to assist in the work.

Consul Scott, in a recent report upon the trade of the Chinese town of Swatow, remarks upon the fact that eleven million fresh eggs figure among the exports. But he tells us that all are certainly not fresh, for it is the custom to ship ducks' eggs which have been incubated to within a few days of hatching. These eggs are brought on board the steamers packed in shallow baskets, with layers of soft Chinese paper between and around them. The baskets are placed about the deck, swung to the awning supports, and occasionally are put in position near the boilers, but as a rule the heat of the climate is quite sufficient to complete the hatching of the eggs. It therefore comes about that at the end of the voyage young ducks are landed at Singapore or Bangkok in lieu of the eggs which originally formed part of the cargo. As a rule the birds come to no harm, but on the contrary exhibit quite a thriving appearance.

In the early days of ordnance, leather was commonly used as a casing for guns, and there is on exhibition at the arsenal at Venice a leathern mortar for firing shells which is said to date from the beginning of the fourteenth century. One would suppose that in these modern days, when the metals have been brought under such marvellous control, a reversion to this ancient type of leather gun could only be regarded as a mild joke. But as a matter of fact a gun, covered with raw hide, and having an inner tube of steel, has recently been subjected to official tests by the Ordnance Board of the United States Army, and has passed through the ordeal with triumph. The patentee of this curious weapon is Mr F. Latulip of Syracuse, N.Y., and his specification is dated June 26, 1894. The principal object of the invention is to cheapen and lighten the construction of gun-barrels, while at the same time they are rendered strong enough to withstand any reasonable explosive strain. It should be noted that the strips of raw hide employed in winding a casing on the inner metallic tube of the gun are first of all subjected to a chemical process which renders them when dry as hard and compact as horn. The weapons at present made under this system are only of small calibre, but they would on account of their comparative lightness be valuable, we should imagine, as mountain-guns.

The switchback railway, which for some years has been a source of delight to those of our holiday-makers who take their pleasures noisily, is likely to find a powerful rival in the Pyramidical Railway, a device which has been designed expressly for places of public amusement. According to the designs published by the company which has been formed to work this invention, its principal feature is a sugar-loaf kind of tower with a railway running round it from top to bottom, and then up a slope, at the end of which the vehicles are brought to a stop. They are in the first place carried to the summit of the tower by a lift, and the fun consists in travelling at an increasing rate of speed round and round the tower until the end of the journey is reached.

Recent returns show that in spite of the continued advance of electric lighting a larger quantity of gas is consumed in the Metropolis than ever before, one company alone selling to Londoners during the past half-year no less than ten million and a half cubic feet. Much of this vast quantity is expended in the form of motive power, for gas-engines are fast supplanting the use of steam in small workshops. Gas is also coming into increasing use for cooking-stoves. It is a matter for regret that for both these purposes a much cheaper kind of gas could not be supplied, for it is most wasteful to use one of high illuminating power where heat only is required. It is the cost of purification, and the additions to the gas necessary to bring its luminosity up to a certain candle-power, that make it at present so costly. But this state of things must remain until the companies are empowered to lay two sets of mains in our streets, one for each kind of gas.

A very curious collection of medical antiquities was exhibited by Messrs Oppenheimer at the Savoy Hotel, London, in connection with the recent meeting of the British Medical Association. It comprised a number of surgical instruments and terra-cotta models which had been found in ancient Roman and Etruscan temples and tombs. The collection was formed by Dr Luigi Sambon, who made a most interesting discovery concerning them. It seems that the models were votive offerings which were presented to the shrines of different deities by the common people, and to the eye of the lay antiquary they seemed to represent fruits. Dr Sambon, however, in studying those objects in the museum at Rome, saw at once that they represented various parts and internal organs of the human being, some deformed and some in a state of disease. It seems certain, therefore, that these models were offered as petitions for the relief, or as emblems of thankfulness for the cure, of different maladies, and may be likened to the wax models of human limbs, &c., which one can see in the present day strung up by the dozen in many continental churches. The models indicate a very intimate knowledge of anatomy, while the surgical instruments exhibited with them show that the ancient Romans must have been skilful operators. The articles include a baby's bottle of very ingenious design, and safety-pins of the identical pattern patented in modern times.

Mr Ingall, in the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, advocating the adoption of a decimal currency in the United Kingdom, shows how the change could be brought about by slightly altering the value of some of our bronze coins, and by introducing only one new one—namely, the cent, which might conveniently be made of nickel. The proposed arrangement of the coinage would then stand as follows: The farthing would be the unit, and would be reduced four per cent. in value, making it the thousandth part of a pound; the halfpenny would be the five-hundredth part; the penny the two hundred and fiftieth; and the new coin, the nickel cent, the hundredth part of a pound. The sixpence would be renamed 'the quarter florin,' and would represent the fortieth part; while the remaining coins would respectively represent the twentieth, tenth, eighth, fifth, fourth, and second, until we arrive at the sovereign itself. The change to the decimal method would conveniently follow the proposed introduction of the metric system of weights and measures.

The Falls of Foyers, where a factory for the production of aluminium is in progress of erection, were recently visited by the Inverness Field Club, the members of which were received by Dr Common, F.R.S., who is resident director of the British Aluminium Company. Dr Common explained the nature of the works in progress, the chief feature of which was a tunnel about half a mile in length, most of which is cut through the solid rock. Through this tunnel the water will be conducted for working the necessary turbines, and the natural beauties of the place will be but little interfered with. As to debris there will be none, for the bauxite, or aluminium ore, which comes from the north of Ireland, will, by a simple chemical process, have its alumina extracted at the place where it is mined. This alumina will be brought to the factory at Foyers, and the metal will be extracted from it. The cost of manufacture will be from one-fourth to one-fifth that of producing the metal by steam-power, and this has been the great consideration in bringing the factory to Foyers, which has been purchased by the company. According to the promoters of these works, their operations, besides benefiting the inhabitants around, will have no destructive effect upon the great natural beauties of the place.

The vast powers of Niagara have at length been set to do useful work, and the generating stations at the Falls are now delivering electric energy to its first customers at a price which will astonish those who are using electricity here at home. The average charge in Britain is about sixpence per Board of Trade unit, but the Niagara company supply the same quantity, at a handsome profit too, for half a farthing. The first work in which the Niagara current is employed is the production of aluminium, and we have already seen that the minor works at Foyers are to be devoted to the same industry. It would seem that aluminium bids fair to be reckoned among the base metals, instead of being, as it was a few years back, an excessively rare one.

Collectors of coins and others will be interested in the circumstance that the Royal Mint was busy last year in the coining of a British dollar for use in some of our Eastern dependencies. The proposal that this new coin should issue emanated long ago from trading communities of the Straits Settlements and Hong-kong; but the home authorities pointed out that it would be impossible to lay down such dollars at a price which would enable them to compete with the Mexican dollar. Again the subject was brought forward by the Hong-kong Chamber of Commerce when, in consequence of the fall in the value of silver, Mexican dollars became scarce. The proposal was now backed by bankers and others who were competent to judge of its desirability, and eventually designs for the new coin were submitted to Her Majesty for approval. The new coin will necessarily circulate in many countries which are not under the British crown, and for this reason the design required special treatment. The figure of Britannia, with the words 'one dollar,' appears on one side of the new piece, while the reverse bears the denomination in Chinese and Malay characters. Further particulars respecting this new coin will be found in the twenty-fifth annual report of the deputy-master of the Mint for 1894.

Musicians have long recognised the fact that the standard of musical pitch in this country is too high. What was C in the days when Handel was listening to the anvil strokes of the 'harmonious blacksmith' is to-day almost D. The French long ago recognised this gradual but almost insensible rise of pitch, and adopted what is known as the *diapason normal*, while in Britain we have become accustomed to a pitch which is a semitone higher. The Philharmonic Society have now determined to adopt the French standard, and would doubtless have long ago done so had it not been for the opposition of military bands and instrumentalists generally. Certain instruments—clarinets, flutes, oboes, &c.—are constructed for the old pitch, and cannot be converted to the new without an expense of about forty pounds for each band. Now the government grant for bands is eighty pounds per annum to each battalion, while seventy pounds of this goes by the Queen's Regulations to the bandmaster, consequently the expense of the necessary alterations to the instruments would come out of the officers' pockets unless a special grant is made to meet the emergency. Singers will universally rejoice at the proposed alteration, and many owners of pianos will be glad that the reproach can no more be levelled at them that their instruments are not up to 'concert pitch.'

If any one were wishing to demonstrate in a forcible manner that the British had been denied the artistic faculty, he could not possibly get a better peg on which to hang his remarks than one of our street lamp-posts. They are about as hideous in design as they possibly can be, and by their obtrusiveness spoil many a prospect. Happily these obnoxious posts are not suited to the needs of electricity, and a better type of lantern is coming into use with the new lamps. But we are still far behind our Parisian neighbours, whose street fixtures of this kind are admirable and varied in design. Possibly the Highways Committee of London have recognised the desirability of reform, for they are about to offer prizes for the best artistic design for the posts bearing the electric lights which are presently to line the Thames Embankment. We trust that this new departure may gradually lead to a clearance of the old posts.

An interesting paper was read at a recent meeting of the Scottish Meteorological Society by Professor Michie Smith, on the thunderstorms of Madras. Almost every night sheet-lightning could be seen on the horizon, and he attributed this not to the reflection from distant flashes, as was commonly and erroneously supposed, but to the meeting of land winds and sea winds. The first would be heavily charged with dust, while the latter would be free from impurity. He had frequently noticed that when sheet-lightning occurred the clouds were double, and he suggested that these two columns of sea and land clouds might be negative and positive to one another, and thus discharge is brought about between them. The succession of flashes was sometimes so frequent that three hundred could be counted in a minute, and this would go on for as long as an hour and a half. The Indian government had decided to build an observatory at a height of 7700 feet, and although this station was primarily intended for the study of solar physics, a certain amount of meteorological work would be done. Associated with this observatory would be another building 7000 feet below it, and at a distance of three or four miles.

THE ACE OF HEARTS.

By J. S. Fletcher.

I was just starting my professional career, and it was necessary to secure a convenient office. I did not want anything pretentious—an office for myself and a small ante-chamber for the boy whom I had engaged as clerk of all work would amply suit my requirements. I had served my articles with an old-established firm of solicitors in the city, and had been accustomed to great rooms filled with calf-bound volumes and shelves of ancient parchment, and I laughed to think of the difference there must be between the little office I had in my mind's eye and the big place where I had learned my law. Nevertheless I was well content to make a small beginning, and to trust to the future for bringing me an increase of business and of fortune.

Perhaps because I had two or three professional friends thereabouts, I selected Holborn as being a likely spot wherein to pitch my tent. After a good deal of looking about me, I decided to apply to an agent, with whom I went to inspect a place he recommended, a third floor of Parchment Buildings.

'Here you are, sir,' said the agent, unlocking the door of the office on the third floor. 'This is a sort of clerk's office; the principal room is beyond it, and looks out into Parchment Passage, as I told you. Nice situation this, ain't it.'

I walked in and inspected both rooms before answering him. As regarded size and situation they were certainly all that I wanted. The outer office would do very well for my boy-clerk, and the inner would suit me. Nevertheless it was evident that a good deal of cleaning would have to be done before anybody could tenant either room. Two years at least had passed since the rooms were placed in the agent's books.

I said that the rooms would suit me providing that the rent was not excessive. Therewith we fell a-bargaining, and eventually hit on terms which met my approval. A week later I was in full occupancy of my offices. My boy-clerk sat at a little desk in the outer office and pretended to work very hard, while I sat at a big desk in my own sanctum and read law. There was really little else to do in those early days. I sent in my own office appointments, and spent two or three days in seeing them put straight. Wanting some place in which to store a quantity of old books and papers, I had a cupboard cleared of a quantity of rubbish evidently left there by the last tenant. It contained a vast amount of old letters, invoices, and papers, but these had been torn into small scraps and thrown into a corner. The woman who cleaned my rooms complained a good deal about the mess caused by these scraps of paper.

In reply to my inquiries, the woman told me that it would be about three years since the rooms had been occupied. Further interrogated, she said that she could not remember the last tenant's name: it was something foreign, and she did not know how to pronounce it. She did not know what his business was. He was always writing, she said, and sometimes had other foreigners to see him. His name was never painted up on the door of his rooms nor on the lintel down below, and it was her belief that he was no good because he kept himself so quiet. While the woman talked she was engaged in removing the mass of torn and scattered paper from the cupboard. Suddenly she detached something from the contents of her basket and handed it to me.

'He got that the very day he went away,' said she. 'For I remember going down and fetching his letters from the box in the hall below. The first thing he took out of 'em was that there card, and he laid it down on his desk and stared at it like as if he couldn't make it out. That's it, sure enough; though I ain't never set eyes on it since. 'Spect he chucked it away with this here heap o' letters and papers.'

I took the thing from her and looked at it. It was one of a pack of cards, the Ace of Hearts, and would have attracted no attention from anybody but for one slight fact. Through the crimson heart in the centre of the white card some hand had drawn a stiletto with scrupulous fidelity. I had to look at it narrowly to make sure that the stiletto had not been engraved with the red heart. Engraved, however, it had not been; the trace of the artist's pencil was clear enough.

I took possession of the card and put it aside. During the somewhat lazy time which followed I often looked at it and wondered what it signified. I could not help fancying that it had conveyed some sinister message to the man who had occupied my rooms three years previously. Certainly he had left his chambers hurriedly immediately after the receipt of it. I came to the conclusion that my predecessor in the offices in Parchment Passage had been engaged in some mysterious transactions of a not altogether safe nature, and had been warned to go elsewhere by the transfixed Ace of Hearts.

It was spring when I entered into occupancy of my office, and the year went by very quietly until winter set in. My practice had been remarkably limited at first, but as the months went by I obtained an increase of work, and had less time to spend in reading my calf-bound volumes. The first day of December brought me a case which promised to produce something considerable, and I remained late and went on reading until a slight sound on the landing outside made me look up, only to catch sight of the clock, which indicated a late hour of the evening.

Lifting the lamp from my desk I made my way to the door and suddenly flung it open. Then I started with amazement, for there on the landing before me, his face and figure clearly seen in the lamp-light, stood a man, tattered, sickly-looking, and more disconcerted than myself. A man of middle age apparently, and showing more than usual signs of wear and tear at that, for his dark hair was plentifully shot with gray, and his pallid face was deeply lined and seamed. My first glance at him showed me two things—that he was a foreigner and in want.

I was so much astonished at the sight of this unexpected visitor that I stood staring at him for a minute or two. He, on his part, stood staring at me. At last I found my tongue.

'Are you looking for some one?' said I, lamely enough. 'I don't think you'll find any one in at this time.'

He shook his head.

'No,' he answered. 'No—at least I was looking for you.'

'For me? Why?'

'Will you let me come in for a moment?' he said. 'Only for a moment if you please. Oh, there's no need to be afraid of me. I'm not dangerous, though I daresay I look so.'

I hesitated. He looked at me again, and said quietly:

'I used to live in these rooms.'

'Oh,' said I, dimly comprehending that the mysterious tenant stood before me. 'Come in.'

He followed me through the outer office into my own room. When he saw the cheery fire, the comfortable arm-chair by the hearth, and the supper tray laid on the side-table, he sighed. It struck me that perhaps he was both cold and hungry, and I invited him to eat. But at that he shook his head.

'I had better tell you what I want first,' said he. 'I have been on the stairs outside for more than an hour wondering whether you would allow me to enter this room. You see I used to live here, and I left very suddenly about three years ago. I daresay,' he added, 'the other people wondered why I left so suddenly.'

I quietly opened the drawer of my desk in which I had placed the mysterious Ace of Hearts, and drawing it forth, laid it before him.

'Had that anything to do with it?' I said.

He started to his feet as his eyes fell on the card, and I saw great beads of perspiration burst across his forehead under the shock which the sight of the mysterious emblem undoubtedly gave him. He looked from it to me, and from me to the card again, then he sighed heavily and sat down.

'Where did you get that?' he asked quietly.

'It was found amongst a heap of torn papers which you, I think, had thrown into the cupboard yonder. May I inquire what this means?' I said. 'Is it some signal, or a warning, or a secret message? I suppose it had a meaning for you at the time you received it.'

'It had a meaning,' he answered. 'It meant that my life was not worth an hour's purchase—that I had been sentenced to death—that the executioners were on my track. I am a Russian, and familiar with the doings of conspirators from my youth. What I have just told you is true. I was the agent of a secret society here. I offended those in power. I was condemned; and that's the warning.'

'So you fled?'

'More fool I! I fled—to come back at last as you see me. A beggar almost—starving, homeless.'

Again I pressed him to eat. I was fascinated by his story, and wished to hear more.

'Not till I have told you why I came here to-night. I came to recover something that I left here when I fled. I left it because I knew it was safe in the hiding-place I had contrived for it. I was going I knew not whither—possibly into rough places and amongst desperate men. I came back here to London at last, and a great longing came over me to see it once more. That is why I came to your door to-night, resolved to ask you to admit me. The picture is here, and I shall find it.'

He rose, and crossing the room approached a corner of the floor and carefully removed the carpet which I had had laid down. Lifting a loose board underneath, he presently withdrew from the cavity a parcel wrapped in many sheets of strong paper, and came forward to the light again.

'You did not know that you had this so near you,' he said, blowing the dust away from the parcel and proceeding to unwind the various wrappings. 'And now, look!'

An exclamation of wonder and delight burst from my lips. He held before me the portrait of a young and lovely woman, evidently the work of some great miniature painter, and framed heavily in gold and jewels. The frame must have been worth a small fortune in itself, and yet I scarcely noticed it, so beautiful was the face it contained.

The stranger held the picture from him and looked steadily at it in the lamp-light. Then he drew it nearer and kissed the face reverently.

'She is dead,' he said. 'And she died a martyr. She was born to all that the world calls good; she died an exile and in poverty. She was my sister.'

He restored the frame to its wrappings and fastened it up again, and rather against my recommendation placed it in its old hiding-place. He refused my offer of supper, and said he had no more to tell.

With that he bowed, shrugged his shoulders, and went out. I followed him to the head of the staircase and watched him descend. Then something prompted me to open the window and watch him leave the house by the front door. He came out and walked up the passage into Holborn. I was about to shut the window and return to my room, when I saw two men steal out of a neighbouring door-way and follow my visitor. So swift and stealthy were their movements that I had no time to cry out before they had vanished.

I locked up my office and went home, much excited by the events of the evening. I had never had an adventure of such a startling description before, and had never expected to find that my little shabby office contained within it all the elements of a romance. I went to bed, and could not sleep for thinking of it. I was sorry by that time that I had allowed my strange visitor to leave the portrait in my room, and I determined to do something towards finding him and compelling him to remove it.

I went to my office next morning by way of Long Acre. Passing the corner of one of the squalid streets leading towards Drury Lane, I became aware of a small crowd of people gathered outside a house and doing their best to obtain an entry thereto, despite the presence of two or three burly policemen. I went up, and knowing one of the latter, inquired the reason of the commotion.

'It's a murder, sir,' said he. 'And a very rum murder it is, too. Foreign chap found in this here empty house, stabbed through the heart. Like to go in, sir? There's the coroner's officer and the superintendent inside just now. This way, sir. Now then, make way, there; this here gentleman's an official.'

I followed the man inside into a small room destitute of furniture. They had fetched a bench from somewhere and laid the dead man on it. Somehow I was not surprised when I saw him. I had felt certain from the first that I was going to see my strange visitor of the previous evening. And there he lay before me, dead for many hours, the doctor said, with a dagger driven into his heart through a card on which the Ace of Hearts was still recognisable in spite of the blood that had dyed it.

'A foreigner,' said the doctor. 'This is the work of some of those accursed secret societies.'

I went on to my office. My boy met me at the foot of the stairs with a scared look on his face.

'If you please, sir,' said he, 'I think there's been thieves in. The door was burst open when I came with the key this morning.'

I ran upstairs into my room. Everything was in order there. I went straight to the corner, and tore away the carpet and the loose board, and examined the cavity beneath. My hands met nothing. The portrait was gone!

To say that I felt a strange sense of alarm on finding that the portrait, to which recent events had attached such tragic memories, was gone, is needless.

I thought it best to tell the police all I knew. The officials at Scotland Yard to whom I unbosomed myself received my story with interest, but not with surprise. They were too well accustomed to the dark methods and deeds of the secret societies, whose members flee to London when the greater continental cities are forbidden them. Nevertheless, my story did nothing to help them. Indeed, I was told that the perpetrators of these secret murders were seldom found out.

Several months passed away. The cares of business were beginning to press on me, and I had little time in which to speculate on the late mysterious events. I had my first important case in hand, and it required every moment and every thought. I was glad when the courts rose and the long vacation came to bring me a brief holiday. I had won my case, and had gained no small amount of present fame and future gain by doing so. About the second week in August I travelled down to Hull; and thence took steamer to Stavanger for a month in Norway. Coming back by the same route, I found it necessary to stay a night in Hull, and as I had never been there before, I spent the evening in looking round the docks and quays of that ancient port. There I came across a further link in this remarkable story. Wandering along the pavement of the quay which runs from the town to the river, I paused to look in at the window of one of those little dirty shops where marine store dealers gather together all manner of odds and ends, and what was my surprise to see the portrait which had once been hidden in my office!

I paused and looked again through the dirty window. No, there was no doubt about it; that was the portrait. The gold frame was gone, and there were marks on the edges of the picture which seemed to indicate that it had been roughly removed. The face, however, was unmistakable. I had been too much struck by it at first sight to forget its wonderful beauty.

On entering the shop a dirty-looking man, evidently a foreigner, came forward from some den in the rear, rubbing his hands and asking what he could do for me.

'Nothing particular,' I answered. 'I just wish to glance at your stock of curiosities. I am rather fond of picking up rare articles.'

He answered that I was welcome to look round, and went on to say that he had some beautiful things in the way of binocular glasses and chronometers if I was thinking of taking a long voyage. While he chattered volubly about his goods I was leaning over the little partition which separated the shop from the window, examining the portrait from a better point of vantage. I had now no doubt whatever as to its identity, and determined to buy it at whatever cost. After some haggling, I purchased the picture and a Turkish dagger for one guinea.

When I reached the hotel I went up to my room and examined the portrait carefully. It was a small canvas, stretched on a frame twelve inches by nine, and across the back, probably with the idea of keeping out dust and dirt, a stout piece of rough canvas had been tightly stretched and stitched. There was nothing to show that any extraordinary history attached to the picture. I returned to London and locked up the portrait in my office safe.

Time went on, and as my practice increased, I took more rooms in the house in Parchment Passage. Some of them were much more suitable for a private office than the one in which the portrait had been hidden, but I determined to remain in the latter, and devote the others to my clerks. I had a half-superstitious feeling that if ever the mystery of the previous tenant came to be solved, it would be in that room.

It was about two years after the murder, and circumstances then required that I should stay late at the office. I was engaged in settling some difficult business with a client, and he remained with me until half-past nine o'clock. As I was about to turn out the lamp which burned on my table, I heard some one coming slowly up the staircase. I had left the private door of my office open, and could hear the sound distinctly. I turned up the light again, and waited. At first I thought the steps were those of my client, who had possibly forgotten something and was returning, but another moment told me they were not. He was a young, active man, likely to come up three steps at a bound; the man now climbing the stairs was evidently neither young nor active, for he came slowly and apparently with some difficulty.

I went to the door and looked down at the landing. The gas still burned there, and it shone on the figure of a man who was climbing the last flight of stairs. He was a tall, well-built man of fine proportions, but something about the stoop of his shoulders suggested hardship and privation. I could see very little of his face, but I noticed that his beard, which was of unusual length, was gray almost to whiteness. He seemed to be well dressed, and I made up my mind that his intentions were peaceful.

The stranger accosted me in very good English. Somehow I had made up my mind that he was a foreigner. After he had explained his business, which was to find Alexis Vitrefsky of 3 Parchment Passage, a light began to break in upon me. The man he was in search of was the previous tenant! Perhaps the mystery of the portrait was about to be explained.

'Was the person you are in search of a Russian?' I asked.

'Yes, yes,' he answered eagerly. 'Certainly, a Russian. A man of about my own age, but perhaps younger in appearance. I have had things to make me look old.'

'Will you come in a moment?' I said, and led the way into my office. 'Perhaps I can give you some information.'

I gave him a chair, and he sat down. Now that the lamp-light fell full on his face, I saw that he was an extraordinarily handsome man, and that evident suffering and privation had not robbed him of his good looks.

'I shall be very grateful for any information respecting Alexis,' said he. 'And I thank you in anticipation. Perhaps I ought to tell you who I am. I am the Prince Z——.'

He mentioned a name which made me stare with astonishment. Prince Z—— was an escaped political prisoner, who, after spending many years in the Siberian mines, had escaped in a singularly daring fashion, and had recently published a narrative of his adventures and sufferings.

I sat down and told Prince Z—— all that I knew of Alexis Vitrefsky; how he had suddenly left the very room in which we were then sitting, and had returned to it two years later under mysterious circumstances. I told him of the events of that night; how two men had watched Alexis leave my office, and how the unfortunate man had been murdered during the night, and the portrait stolen from its hiding-place. He heard me with anxiety and disturbance, and when I told him that the portrait was gone, he rose up and paced the floor in evident distress.

'Then I am indeed ruined!' said he. 'Sir, that portrait meant everything to me. It was indeed the property of Alexis, but its possession meant more to me and to my children than I can tell you. But I see you do not understand me. With your permission, I will narrate to you certain passages in my sad history.'

I was half-tempted, on seeing his distress, to tell him how strangely I had recovered the portrait; but I refrained, remembering that he might, after all, be an impostor, and that it would be better for me to hear his story before I told mine. I therefore begged him to proceed.

'It is not a pleasant story,' said he, 'that I have to tell you. As you know, I am of the new party in Russia. Since boyhood I have worked, planned, and suffered for my country, and in consequence I have been hated by those in power. Until some years ago, however, I was allowed to pursue my own course in comparative freedom. Now and then the police warned me that I was approaching too near the line in my writings; but as I happened to belong to one of the best families, and was rich and powerful, I was practically allowed to go my own way. At last, however, I found that neither my noble name nor my riches were to help me. Information reached me that I was to be arrested and severely dealt with. Fortunately I had been somewhat prepared. My wife was in Paris; my two young sons were at school in Germany. I had secured to them a moderate sum in case anything happened to me. I had never dreamt that all I had would be confiscated. Such, however, was to be the case, according to my informant's news, which had come from the highest source. I was to be stripped of land and goods and reduced to beggary.

'I hurriedly consulted with Alexis Vitrefsky, an old student-friend of mine, as to what should be done. He was then unknown to the authorities, and was about to start for a tour in England. We went to an English banker in St Petersburg, and by his advice I turned all my negotiable securities into English notes. The good banker gave me fifty English notes of a thousand pounds each for my papers. These I handed to Alexis. He was to carry them to

England and preserve them until I could join him. I was watched, but I hoped to escape.

'Alexis was puzzled how to carry the notes. If he had them about his person he might be searched, and awkward questions as to his right to them put to him. People bound on a three months' European tour do not usually carry fifty thousand pounds' worth of English notes with them. Alexis, however, quickly solved the difficulty. It was his practice to carry with him wherever he went the portrait of his dead sister, whom he regarded with feelings of absolute veneration. She, like myself, had engaged in the new movement, and she had suffered. Alexis brought his cherished portrait, handsomely mounted in gold, to my house. We placed the notes behind the canvas, and stitched a strong piece of coarse cloth across the frame, so that none could see where the notes lay hid. Knowing that Vitrefsky was my true friend, and that he would take care of the portrait, I felt my little fortune to be safe.

'Alexis left for England, and within a few days of his departure I was arrested. I spent some weary years in the fortress of St Peter and Paul; subsequently I was sent to the mines. But before I left the fortress I had news of Alexis. By means of those trusted messengers who are to be met with even amongst the government officials, he contrived to send me a cipher letter, telling me that he was living in London, and giving this house as his address. Whenever I was free I was to come here to receive the sum I had entrusted to him.

'I have now told you all. I am free, and I have come here, only to find that Alexis is murdered and the portrait gone.'

I was so convinced that the prince was telling me the truth, that I no longer hesitated about handing the portrait over to him. Before doing so, however, I asked him one more question.

'Pardon me,' I said, 'but what of your wife and boys?'

He shook his head.

'My wife died during my imprisonment,' he answered. 'My boys are living here in London. Poor lads, they had met with indifferent treatment in Germany, and I fear that they will find life hard, now that I have no means of helping them.'

'Then your estates were confiscated?'

'Everything I had was confiscated. When I finally escaped I was absolutely penniless.'

I went to my safe and took the portrait from the drawer in which I had placed it on my return from Hull. Without saying a word, I handed it to the prince, who received it with an expression of the utmost astonishment.

'See if your money is still there,' said I.

'I have no doubt of it,' he answered, as he cut away the stitches from the canvas back. 'But how did the picture come into your possession? You told me it had been stolen.'

I told him how I had found the portrait in the shop at Hull, and had recognised it again. While I talked, he turned back the canvas and discovered the bank-notes securely wrapped in folds of paper, exactly as he had described. His delight at finding himself once more wealthy was wonderful to witness. 'Poor Alexis!' he said, suddenly remembering the friend to whom he had trusted his sole resources. 'I have my own theory as to his death. I have heard that he became closely connected with one of the more determined secret societies, and had the ill-fortune to break with certain of its most powerful members. These people never forget. Alexis was probably tracked down to the very last.'

'But the portrait?' I said. 'Why should the murderers steal that?'

The prince shrugged his shoulders.

'Ah,' said he; 'probably while Alexis was conversing with you in here and showing you the portrait and its valuable frame, the two men told off to kill him were watching you. Of course they stole the portrait for the sake of the frame.'

The explanation seemed a likely one. I remembered that there had been nothing to prevent Vitrefsky's assassins from following him up the stairs that night, or from listening at the open door while he conversed with me.

Prince Z—— carried his bank-notes away with him. He wished to reward me, saying that but for me the money would have been lost to him. The only reward I could consent to take, however, was the picture. That I kept, and still possess, a memento of what I think a remarkable romance.

Prince Z—— now resides permanently in London, prematurely aged by the trials of his past life, but undisturbed, so far as I know, by government spies or the emissaries of secret societies.

ICI-BAS.

From the French of Sully-Prudhomme.

Here below the lilacs die,
All the song-birds heavenward fly;
I dream of a summer for ever and aye.

Here below the lips that greet
Leave no imprint when they meet;
I dream of a kiss that will ever be sweet.

Here below the lovers mourn
Friendships dead and hearts forlorn;
I dream of the ties that shall never be torn.

Wilmot Vaughan.

*** TO CONTRIBUTORS.

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AN ADVENTUROUS WEEK.

By CHARLES EDWARDES.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

Canea at last. I had not bargained for the journey by way of Constantinople, nor had I been warned of the difficulties I should have to overcome ere I could set foot openly in this 'most distressful' of the Mediterranean islands. The Cretans were in revolt. That was the explanation. And Messieurs les Turques were much alarmed lest Europe should substantially aid the rebels and once for all hand the island over to Greece.

We were a strange party on board the *Osman:* Moslem soldiers by the score, their officers a bad-looking lot; some Jews; renegade Greeks who had in their own artful way curried favour with the authorities in Turkey; two Italian doctors, and others.

There was, in fact, but one man with whom I could fraternise. That was Naylor, newspaper free-lance, and much else. How he had got a 'permit' to enter the island, I never made out. But he had it, and meant, he declared, to make the most of it.

He and I were on the *Osman's* deck while the steamer screwed itself slowly into the contracted harbour. I glanced about me eagerly, possessed by a sense of adventure that had never yet stirred me. True, I was only after olives; but, as Naylor said, I was putting myself in the way of a good deal besides those estimable little fruits.

'Look at the tall house to the left,' said Naylor, handing me his glass amid the Babel of voices. 'Third storey, middle window.'

'Yes?' I said, when I had gazed.

'The fellow with the fez is the Pasha. I'll bet my boots he isn't happy. He has a deluge of blood on his mind already, and he'll have more before he's disgraced.'

'Disgraced—why?' I asked. The gentleman at the window, watching us, Pasha or not, appeared nothing out of the common.

'Because he's on the horns of a dilemma, my dear sir. If he crushes the revolt in the usual way (and there's no other), all the Powers will cry "Shame" on the Sultan, and clamour for atonement; his Excellency yonder will then be the scapegoat. And if the Cretans are too much for him, the Vizier and Sultan together will chuck him into obscurity or worse for incompetence. Pleasant position, very!—See those mountains?'

He pointed to a high ridge, well at the back of the jumble of houses. They were a faint purple in the early light, with none of their pinnacles and defiles brought into prominence.

'That,' he proceeded, 'is where the trouble's at its warmest. That's Sphakia, and that, please luck and Giorgio Thyatis, is where I'm bound for, Pasha or no Pasha.'

'Risky,' I remarked.

'Risky, of course. But I'm nimble on my pins, and quite as good a shot as the average Turk. The more adventures, the more copy. That's my métier.—Hullo! you're wanted.'

The *Osman's* captain had pronounced my name. He was indicating me to a fierce-looking person in Albanian dress, whose other conspicuous characteristics were a tremendous pair of moustaches and a brace of ivory-headed pistols stuck in his waistband. It was the consul's kavass, as it happened.

'Follow me!' said this individual theatrically, when I had confirmed the captain's words.

I nodded to Naylor, said I would see him later at the Canea inn, and mixed myself up in the crowd of strugglers on the loose gangway. As I understood neither Greek nor Turkish, I could not be sure the language I heard was unparliamentary; but, from its sound and emphasis, I think much of it must have been. If so, there was some excuse. Even aided by my huge guide, I did not come out of the trouble without a large bruise on my left leg. An impatient warrior had scraped me hard against one of the iron joints on the gangway railings.

However, we got ashore at length, and Canea's sweet smells declared themselves to my nose.

The consulate was close to the harbour. I recognised it by its flag. There was a mosque hard by; so near, in fact, that it seemed to be part of the establishment. Its white domes already glowed in the sunlight.

Ordinarily, one would not have looked for an official of any kind to be at work at seven o'clock in the morning. But the times in Crete were extraordinary. Hence our good consul's energy. He greeted me politely enough, and at once proceeded to cross-examine me.

'I must warn you,' he said, 'that you could not have made a greater mistake than to come to Crete for commercial purposes—or any other—just now.'

I said I was sorry to hear it, but proposed to take my chance.

'With whom do you hope to do business?' he continued.

'Nicolopoulos,' I replied, 'is our agent.'

The consul's lips pouted, and he shrugged his shoulders.

'Nothing could be worse,' he said. 'Nicolopoulos is a "suspect." I'm bound to say he deserves to be considered as such, too. If I were you, I would abandon my enterprise and return to Constantinople when the *Osman* leaves.'

'Do you mean that he sides openly with the patriots?' I asked, somewhat upset by the news.

'No. If he did that, he would be imprisoned. But I will tell you, in confidence, Mr Graham, that he may be in custody any day. What that means in the present state of affairs, you can guess.'

'Then the harvest this year'——

'May be, in all probability will be, a negative quantity. The Turks are destroying square miles of orchards. The island looks like being so depopulated that there'll be no gathering the fruit that's left.'

I uttered an exclamation of disgust. 'When will the boat return?' I asked.

'To-morrow, the day after, or the next day; one can never tell.'

'Oh, in that case, there's time to think it over,' I replied. 'And, meanwhile, I can't do better than see Nicolopoulos himself.'

'Very well. You shall have my kavass, and I'll get you a pass from the Pasha. That isn't everything in Crete now, you understand; and you can't be too careful what you do. Look in when you like, and make use of me when you want to.'

I thanked the consul warmly, waited for the governor's letter, and then set off towards Khalepa for Nicolopoulos.

Had I not seen the streets of the Sultan's capital, I should have marvelled at the filth and confusion of these of Canea. Both were extreme. The stones of the pavement were slippery with garbage, and stank. And to this evil odour were added others that came from the crowd of Jews, Turks, infidels, and negroes who jostled each other and us, and a third of whom seemed to be swinging blows and curses at the little donkeys with bent heads and bared hide, which they pushed before them as best they could. The street cries were deafening. I was glad when we had got out of their reach and were through the sombre gateway of the town in the butchers' quarter. This was a little suggestive of Moslem barbarity, methought, in the way the slaughterers had stuck the heads of their victims on iron pikes and set them at their doors. But, as a matter of fact, the butchers were Greeks for the most part.

The kavass was in a hurry. His strides were needlessly long, considering the Cretan sun and my own comparative smallness. But I made no protest. If I was only wasting time in Crete, the sooner I settled the programme of my movements the better.

In a little while, we struck the coast, near the great ochre walls of the town. There was a breeze on shore, and the sight of the white-capped waves tumbling on to the sand was refreshing. Indeed, Crete looked more exhilarating now every minute. There were red-coats on the walls, trifling and eating out of copper pans, and very merry in spite of the insurrection. I could see the toes of some of the warriors sticking through their broken boots, and holes as big as my head in their jackets. But these are small matters to the military authorities in Turkey, who rely more on muscle and fatalism than mere externals such as discipline and neatness.

After skirting the shore for a time, and passing the famous settlement of Bedouins—a unique thing out of Africa—and a dusty exercising-ground for troops, we struck up towards a rocky eminence with villas and gardens on it. This was Khalepa, the fashionable suburb of Canea. Hence the White Mountains, their purpled sides speckled with sunlight and cloud shadows, looked superb. As I wiped my face, I could not refrain from wishing I had Naylor's spirit and ability for adventure to carry me into their midst. It was hard to believe, however, that men were shooting each other up there like so many partridges.

We paused at length outside a residence with a high white wall to it. Even the kavass seemed willing to breathe in comfort for a moment or two.

Then we entered by a green gate, the fastening of which would have been too much for me unaided. We were in a glorious, leafy avenue, the lower part a bower of roses. On both sides of us was a tangled, beautiful garden. The scent of orange and lemon blossom was a joy to inhale.

My guide strode on in his aggressive, masterful way to the verandahed porch of a pale-blue villa at the end of the avenue. I followed him more at my leisure. It was now that I heard the faint musical twang of a mandoline in the garden. I looked for the musician, but saw no one.

Twice the man rang the bell, the second time with extreme impatience.

'Never mind,' I said, in comment upon what I supposed to be an expletive of disgust: 'now that I know where he lives, I can come out again by myself in the afternoon.'

But this proposition did not please the worthy fellow.

'I shall go behind,' he said; 'perhaps they wash, and do not hear.'

Left to myself, I listened intently. There was something seducing about the mandoline among the blossoms. I could just distinguish the air, which was plaintive.

Then a voice in me bade me seek the author of the sweet sounds, and, without hesitation, I crept through a tangle of vines and sweet peas, and so gained a clear space under a wide-spreading fig-tree. Beyond, nestled in more greenery, was a tiny arbour, and a figure in white stirred amid the verdure—a girl's form, with the profile towards me.

I could not at first understand why my heart made such a fuss about this petty prowl of mine. It beat in my body as if it were seriously disordered. But I read the riddle when I had moved a few steps more and caused the girl suddenly to turn and face me. It realised that it was in the presence of one of God's most beautiful creations.

I cannot describe her except in bald category. She may have been seventeen or eighteen: appearances, however, are deceptive in the warm south. She was tall and slender, with features of extraordinary regularity and softness combined. There was a lovely colour in her cheeks as she looked at me, with parted lips, and an expression in which surprise and something of timidity were sweetly blended. And her eyes were large, and of that rare true violet colour which I am told is only to be found in Crete, and that seldom. She held the mandoline to her side with her left hand, round which a handkerchief was wrapped.

Never have I seen any one so beautiful. I don't know that I was more susceptible than other men of seven-and-twenty, but I know that it was all I could do to keep myself from approaching this girl, and kneeling to her, as if she were the goddess of Beauty herself.

The voice of that miserable kavass, crying 'Monsieur! monsieur!' came as a most undesirable distraction. Yet perhaps it was as well. Otherwise, in my infatuation, there is no telling what I might not have done. And so, instead of allowing my heart to confess its folly by a word or a look, I merely raised my hat and returned to the avenue.

'That was not right, monsieur,' exclaimed the kavass, when I came out again alongside of his petticoated legs.

'At any rate,' I replied, 'it is my own affair.—Is he not in?'

'I shall find him for you, if you will return with me,' was the sullen rejoinder.

I listened afresh for the mandoline, but could not hear it. I tried to pierce the lattice-work of fruit-trees, creepers, and flowers for one more glimpse of that wonderful face; but it was in vain.

We recurred to the hot dusty road, my haughty guide taking longer strides than ever. Once I questioned him about the girl in the garden. He answered with a look that ought to have set me laughing, but which irritated me extremely instead. Only when we were nearing the town did a sensible idea enter my head.

'Wait a moment,' I said, with my hand in my pocket. 'Isn't that a wine-shop?'

It was a commonplace little booth, with a bush over the porch: a wine-shop, sure enough.

'Here's something for yourself, my friend,' I added. 'You have wasted much time on me; and we are both thirsty, or ought to be.'

The exuberant salute with which the man acknowledged the tip told me I had done the proper thing. We entered the shanty and drank malvasia, the blue-breeched Cretan who served us staring considerably.

'You think we shall find Nicolopoulos this time?' I began diplomatically.

'I think so, sir. He has a sick wife. He visits her once a week. It is the day.'

'A sick wife! What an odd thing that she doesn't live with him!'

The kavass shook his head gravely, drank, and then wiped one end of his moustaches: it had dropped into his wine-glass like a rat's tail.

'By the way,' I continued, as indifferently as possible, 'I saw up there in the garden a young lady in white.'

'Ah! you see her?'

The man's animation piqued me.

'Yes. Who is she?'

'She is the only child, the daughter, poor thing!' said the kavass. He cooled his red face with his white skirts in a most unbecoming manner.

'Nicolopoulos's daughter?'

'That is it, sir. She is fine to see, but it is not good to love her.'

At these words, I am afraid I blushed; and for the second or third time in our brief acquaintance, I yearned to kick the kavass. I did not condescend to ask for an explanation.

'What is her name?' I inquired instead.

'I have heard, sir, that she is called Helena. But no matter what she is called. And now, please, we must go.'

Helena!

I tongued the name a hundred times ere we were through the town by one gate and out of it by another. It was the very name for so pure and spotless a maiden. It also fitted her beauty like no other name. I assured myself that even as of old Helen of Troy was the most lovely damsel among mankind, so Helena Nicolopoulos of Khalepa, Crete, was just as matchless. This was significant enough. But my state was proved to conviction by the determination that entered me not to sail by the *Osman*, even though I could not do a farthing's worth of business with Nicolopoulos or any one else.

This time we left Canea as if we were going straight to Sphakia. The green plain stretched before us to the first of the purple swellings which, rising one above the other, get to a height of eight thousand feet with sublime abruptness.

We passed the lepers of the town, squatted on the sand among the aloes of the roadside. 'Aman! aman!' (Pity! pity!) they cried, as they showed their blotched and swollen bodies, fingerless hands, and toeless feet or stumps of feet.

'Are there many of them in Crete?' I asked the kavass. He had set me the good example of charity.

'There are many, monsieur,' he replied. 'We come now to the houses.'

It was the leper village, in fact: a coterie of little white dwellings set close together, and hedged about with prickly-pear, aloes, and tamarisk bushes. Convenient, too, for the begging purposes of the inmates, seeing that the high-road to the villages of the plain traversed their midst.

'Wait,' I said: 'I should like to look inside one of the houses.'

'There is not need to wait to do it,' said my guide. 'We go to the last one to find Nicolopoulos.'

'What! here?' I exclaimed.

'It is his wife. She is a leper, monsieur, like others.'

'A leper!'

The mother of Helena Nicolopoulos a leper! The bare suggestion seemed to act upon me like a poison. And yet it was too brutal a possibility to be entertained.

But, sure enough, as we were approaching the end of the village, Nicolopoulos, gray-bearded and stately, and with something of the sternness of Greek tragedy in his face, came from within and met us. His greeting was as dignified and tragic as his countenance.

'I do not do business this year,' he replied to my question, which I fear I put with cold-blooded promptitude after a minute or two.

'But as agent merely'——

'It is all one, sir. I think I give up my business altogether. There is reasons that I will not tell: God knows there is reasons. And, another thing, it is not worth your while to make much thought of the oil here this year. There will be much fire in Crete, and fire burn oil. You understand!'

This with a meaning look. Then he turned and said something to the kavass in Greek. The kavass replied with a shrug of the shoulders almost to his ears. He made so long an answer, sinking his voice lower and lower, that, having looked long enough at the handsome, though ragged, countryman who was coming towards us from Canea, I turned towards the hovel in which Madame Nicolopoulos the leper lived. It was too horrible to think of.

But the sight I now saw was even more horrible still. A woman was standing at the threshold of the house. Her sex was hardly more than conjecturable by her dress, which hung about her like a sack tied at the waist. She did not seem inordinately large in the body, but her face was little better than a purple patch, radiant as if it had been rubbed with oil. Nose and lips seemed wanting, and the eyes were almost closed by the swellings above and beneath their cavities.

This poor object was beckoning. I shuddered in spite of my efforts to do no such thing, touched Nicolopoulos on the shoulder to draw his attention to her, and turned away.

'I shall see you again, if you will do me the favour,' said the merchant.

In this suggestion I acquiesced eagerly enough.

'And now for the inn,' I said to the kavass. 'It is quite time to release you.'

Nicolopoulos rejoined his wife—his awful wife, whom he still loved, poor fellow. We set our faces towards Canea.

We were passing the countryman already mentioned, when the kavass suddenly drew himself up and put on the braggart air that goes so comically with the starched petticoats of the Greek warrior.

The two exchanged a salutation, brief, but, as it seemed to me, forcible. There was even more determination in the other's face than in the kavass's.

'Who is that good-looking man?' I asked. 'Any one might suppose he was in a disguise.'

'That,' said the kavass, 'is Giorgio Thyatis, the Sphakiot. He is bold to come into the city. His life is wanted, and he will lose it one day.'

I remembered the name Thyatis as that of Naylor's patriot, and turned to have another look at the splendid Cretan. I was just in time to see him slip into the hovel that held Nicolopoulos and his wife—Helena's mother!

THE COAL OF THE WORLD.

It is not improbable that the great economic problem of the future will be concerned not with gold, but with coal. Regarded in its industrial and social aspects, coal is assuredly the most valuable mineral known to man; though by confusion of thought on the subject of 'value,' most people would stare incredulously if we said a lump of coal was worth more than a Cape diamond. As a matter of fact, no man would give a gold nugget for a lump of coal, unless he were in absolute extremity for fuel; but there is a difference between value in exchange and value in use. And it is with regard to use that we appraise the value of coal as the highest among the minerals.

It is the foundation of all industry, and industry is the foundation of wealth. The modern cry, incoherent though it be, for the nationalisation of our coal-mines, is evidence of the knowledge that coal is the first necessary of industrial existence under modern conditions. Now, we are not going to discuss nationalisation, or any other political or controversial question, but we propose to review, as briefly as may be, the coal-supplies of the world.

For at least ten centuries coal has been worked in this country, the first mention of it occurring in ecclesiastical records of the north of England in the ninth century; though not until Elizabeth's time does it seem to have been used for manufacturing purposes. After a thousand years of constantly increasing production, a Royal Commission (in 1871) estimated that the coal in the country still unmined and available for future use (though some of it is at too great a depth to be mined yet with profit) was then 146,000 million tons. More recently, some German investigators have estimated the coal resources of the United Kingdom to be 198,000 million tons; those of Germany, 112,000 million tons; those of France, only 18,000 million tons; those of Austria-Hungary, 17,000 million tons; and those of Belgium, 15,000 million tons. It is practically impossible for the average mind to grasp such figures, but, after all, they take no account of the deposits of the United States, which are larger than ours, of those of South America, of Australia, of New Zealand, of India, of Japan, and of China, which country is now believed to have the largest coal deposits in the world. Calculations have frequently been made of the number of years it will take to exhaust our own coal-fields, both at the present rate of consumption and in the increasing ratio of production. But these calculations always leave out of sight the probable economies in consumption that science will produce, and the lessening demands upon us of other nations as the world's deposits are opened up elsewhere. And we need not greatly trouble ourselves about the possible high price of coal a few centuries hence.

What seems to us more probable than the early exhaustion of our coal-fields is our displacement from the position of first place among the coal-suppliers of the world. And the reasons for thinking so will appear as we proceed.

More coal is actually produced in Great Britain than in any other country, or than in any other three countries excepting the United States. We reached what was till 1894 high-water mark of production in 1891, when the pits yielded a total of about 185½ million tons; but in 1892 the Durham strike, and in 1893 the Midland strike, in turn prevented that output from being reached.

In 1894 the production was 188¼ million tons, but to be on the safe side, and barring strikes and accidents, we may call our normal output 185 million tons. About one-fifth of that is yielded by the great coal-field of Durham and Northumberland, and the next most valuable deposit is in Wales, which has a coal area of about one thousand square miles, and produces the best steam-coal in the world. Welsh steam-coal is preferred to all others, and therefore brings the highest price, because it develops heat more rapidly and gives off less smoke than any other coal. But some of the best Indian coal, notably that of Assam, is said to have properties not much inferior to 'best Cardiff.' The rapidity with which the port of Cardiff has developed in consequence of the trade in Welsh coal is one of the phenomena of our industrial history.

As far as Europe is concerned, the next largest producer is Germany, which in 1893 (we are using in all cases the latest figures published by the Board of Trade) produced 73,852,000 tons. The next is France, with 25¼ million tons, and the next Belgium, with 19½ million tons. The other European countries are far behind. Then Austria and Hungary together produce 10¼ million tons; Russia, 8 million tons; Spain, 1¼ million tons; Sweden, 200,000 tons; and Italy, 300,000 tons. In round numbers, Europe now produces about 330 million tons of coal every year. But most of the producing countries require for their own consumption all they can produce, and more. Thus, Russia, Austria-Hungary, France, Spain, and Italy are all large importers, and do not export at all, except France occasionally to a small extent. The only countries which produce more than they consume, and are therefore able to supply others, are Great Britain, Germany, and Belgium. Yet the largest producers are also the largest consumers. Thus in the United Kingdom, in 1891, we consumed close upon 145½ million tons, though in 1893, owing to industrial strife, our record was barely 127 millions. Germany, in 1891, consumed upwards of 68 million tons, and in 1893 nearly 67½ millions. The consumption of France is only about half that of Germany, which seems singular, considering the industrial character of the people, and the amount of money in the country; but in France there is also a very large consumption of wood, turf, and lignite. Belgium, one of the busiest countries in the world for its size, manages to consume only 14¾ of the 19½ million tons it produces.

If the proportion of coal consumed per head of population in the countries of Europe be considered, the results appear curious. Dividing the latest ascertained total of consumption by the latest estimate of population, the figures show the following startling contrasts:

	Tons.		
United Kingdom	3·30	per head	per annum.
Russian Empire	0·07	"	"
Sweden	0·38	"	"
Germany	1·33	"	"
Belgium	2·48	"	"
France	0·92	"	"
Spain	0·14	"	"
Austria-Hungary	0·31	"	"

Thus, in proportion to population, the Belgians are the largest consumers in the world next to ourselves. In the United States the proportion works out at 2·42 tons per head per annum; but in the United States, of course, there is a very large consumption of wood for fuel, especially out West, and on the river steamers, &c.

While Germany produces less than half the coal that we do, the estimated cost-price, or rather the average price computed from the total valuation of the gross output, is very nearly the same as ours—namely, 6s. 9½d. per ton at the pit's mouth in the United Kingdom, as against 6s. 9d. per ton in Germany. The cost, or average value, works out in Belgium at 7s. 5¾d., in France at 9s. 11½d., in Spain at 6s. 9d., in Italy at 5s. 9d., in Austria at 5s. 9d., and in Hungary at 8s. 2d. But probably nowhere are the points of production so near to the great areas of consumption and of shipment as in Great Britain and Belgium, so that valuations at the pit-mouth mean different things in different countries. Besides, there is a great difference in the quality of the coal of the several countries.

Now, coal is not only the basis and feeder of all industries—it gives employment to a very large proportion of the capital and labour of the world in the mere getting and distributing of it. While it is impossible to estimate how many persons obtain a living in connection with the transport, shipping, and sale of coal, we can obtain a tolerably close estimate of the number dependent on the mining of it. The following is a fair estimate of the number of persons employed in coal-mining in Europe:

United Kingdom	640,660
Russia	40,500
Sweden	1,500
Germany	290,630
Belgium	116,860
France	130,000
Spain	12,000
Italy	2,300
Austria-Hungary	60,000
Total	1,294,450

On the usual basis of five persons to each bread-winner, this would represent a population of about 6½ million souls directly dependent on coal-mining in Europe.

So much for Europe; and now let us look further afield. Most Britons will be surprised, perhaps, to learn that the United States are running us hard for first place in coal-production. As a matter of fact, in 1893 they were only 1½ million tons behind us; but 1893, as we have seen, was a lean year in our coal-mining. The American output in 1894 was over 165 million tons, and it has increased about sixty per cent. within ten years. That is the remarkable thing about the American coal-supply—the tremendous rate of increase, far exceeding ours. In fact, the United States now produce so much, that they rank among the coal-exporting countries. The surplus they have to spare for sale is as yet not large—only two or three million tons per annum, but it is increasing; and it is to this fact and its future significance that we desire to draw attention.

The American coal-mines give employment to about 365,000 persons, and the average price of the annual output is equal to only 5s. 4d. per ton at the pit-mouth. Thus, American coal is the cheapest in the world, although, of course, as distances are long in America, the haulage-cost to the consumer may average more than in Europe. About two-thirds of the whole is produced in Pennsylvania, where both anthracite and bituminous coal are raised; and the next largest producing States are Illinois, Ohio, and West Virginia. No fewer than twenty-nine States in America now produce coal, and quite one-half of them produce each over two million tons per annum. In Canada, too (principally Nova Scotia), there is an output of about four million tons per annum, which is said to be capable of indefinite expansion. But confining attention for the moment to the United States, it may be said that the coal-area there is estimated to extend over about 200,000 square miles. This may mean anything or nothing, for a coal-area does not necessarily mean a country in which coal can be raised and marketed to profit. But Pennsylvania has a coal-area of 12,000 square miles, which is already yielding about 100 million tons per annum; and West Virginia has a coal-area of 16,000 square miles, which as yet has barely yielded ten million tons per annum. Yet the West Virginia coal is reputed superior to the Pennsylvanian, and is much more easily, and therefore more cheaply, mined. The average cost of West Virginian coal is stated at only 3s. 4d. per ton at the pit-head, as against an average of about 5s. 4d. given by the Board of Trade for the whole of America.

It is in West Virginia that is produced the famous Pocahontas Coal, which since the English colliers' strike of 1893 has been extensively used by the great transatlantic lines of steamers. It is said that West Virginia possesses not only the richest, but also the most extensive and most easily worked, coal-beds in the whole of the Western Hemisphere. The beds are so near the surface that they are quarried rather than mined, and water-carriage in all directions provides ready and cheap access to markets. But not only that: the mines are near enough to the sea-board to permit of West Virginian steam-coal being put on board of vessels at the port of Norfolk at as low a price as the best Welsh coal can be put on board of vessels at Cardiff. Mining is still in its infancy in this State, but within the last ten years the output has trebled, and there can be little doubt that West Virginia is destined to be one of the leading sources of coal-supply of the world—especially for ocean traffic—in competition with the Tyne and South Wales. We do not mean that this coal is likely to be landed on our own shores to any extent, but that it will be sent to many of the coaling stations which at present are replenished from our ports.

Another very important coal-field in the Western Hemisphere is that of Southern Chili, of which the port of Coronel is the natural outlet. During recent years, there have been steady developments in mining and railway communication in this coal-region, which produces a coal considered for steam-raising purposes not much inferior to the famous West Hartley of the Northumbrian mines. Political and financial troubles have retarded the development of Chilian coal, but if the mines are capable, as is estimated, of producing ten million tons per annum, it will be obvious that Chili can monopolise the whole of the supply of the west side of both the American continents up to San Francisco.

At San Francisco, however, will be met—indeed, now exist—two formidable competitors in Japanese and Australian coal.

It is just about a hundred years since coal was discovered in New South Wales by a shipwrecked sailor; but it was not until about 1830 that the mineral was worked. The carboniferous strata of Australia are estimated to cover an area of ten million acres. Coal is undoubtedly the most valuable mineral product of New South Wales, closely as the colony is associated with gold, and the coal-measures there embrace an area of about 24,000 square miles, including the five great coal-fields of the Hunter River, the Illawarra, the Lithgow, and the Namoi River. Sydney lies in the centre of the coal-mining districts; but Newcastle is the most accessible port of shipment. In round numbers, New South Wales mines now yield about four million tons per annum, of which rather more than one-half is exported to the other colonies and to the Pacific States of America, to China, the Eastern Archipelago, Burma and Southern India, the Pacific Islands, and the Straits Settlements. The best quality of New South Wales coal is considered by some experts to be, for steam-raising purposes, rather better than the best Northumbrian, and only slightly inferior to the best Cardiff coal. The production has trebled within the last twenty years, but the industry is still in its infancy, and the Newcastle of the antipodes may be destined to be a great and flourishing city when Newcastle-on-Tyne is a deserted ruin surrounded by exhausted coal-pits.

The coal-measures of Queensland extend over an area of about 14,000 square miles, and the formations are of enormous prospective value. It is only recently that mining has been prosecuted, and the output yet is only about 300,000 tons per annum, but Queensland coal will find a place in the commerce of the future. On the other side of the Continent, in Western Australia, large deposits of coal have been reported, and if the transport problem can be satisfactorily solved, here will be an additional source of supply for the Eastern Archipelago and the Straits. But more within the range of practical commerce is the coal of New Zealand, which enabled the *Calliope* to win her famous battle against the tempest at Samoa. New Zealand coal is now being mined to the extent of 700,000 tons per annum, is regularly supplied to steamers in the Colonial and trans-Pacific trades, and is year by year finding fresh foreign outlets. In 1891, the total coal-production of Australasia was rather over five million tons, and it is now probably not short of six million tons, or about equal to that of Russia.

The most astonishing, because unexpected, additions to the world's supply are those of India and Japan. The extent to which coal-mining has been developed in India is little realised in this country, where people have a difficulty in associating mining and factory-working with Hindustan. But in Assam, in Bengal, and, more recently, in the Madras Presidency, coal-seams of great richness are being steadily opened up. The Assam coal is ranked almost as high as the best Cardiff, and Bengal coal only a little inferior. All the steamers in the Indian trade—and their name is legion—now burn Indian coal for coasting voyages and homeward runs, and the intermediate coaling stations on the eastern trunk-lines of ocean-traffic are now stocked from India, Australia, and Japan. The mines of Japan are now turning out about four million tons per annum. In China, coal has, so far, only been mined at Haiping, and at Keelung in Formosa; but it is known to exist in such quantities in every province of the empire, that some people think that China is destined to be the great coal-supplier of the East. An example has been set the Chinese by the French, who are now actually engaged in coal-mining in Annam and Tonquin. A further source of supply in Asia is in the Ussuri district of Eastern Siberia, spoken of in a former article in the *Journal* ('The Trans-Siberian Railway,' No. 498, Vol. X., July 15, 1893). And passing from Asia to Africa, we find mining in active progress in Cape Colony, Natal, and the Transvaal, and that the coal is not only supplying local requirements, but is being regularly shipped at Durban for steamer use.

These are some facts not generally known, but of greater importance than can be foreseen. In conclusion, and to sum up, we estimate from the latest returns we have been able to obtain that the following approximates the present annual coal-production of the world:

	Tons.
Europe, as above shown	330,000,000
United States and Canada	170,000,000
Chili	3,000,000
Australasia	6,000,000
Transvaal, Natal, and Cape	600,000
Japan	4,000,000
China	1,000,000
Annam and Tonquin (unknown)	
India	3,400,000
Siberia (unknown)	
Total	518,000,000

It will thus be seen that Europe no longer supplies all the coal of the world, but only about three-fifths, and of the total supply Great Britain contributes only thirty million tons (or, say, one-seventeenth of the whole) to foreigners, that being the amount of her exports.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

By G. Manville Fenn.

CHAPTER XXV.—TWO PAIRS OF FOUL HANDS.

'You, my dear Brant Dalton. Sit down, my modern Apollo. I'm not busy.'

'None of your chaff,' growled Brant. 'I'm not in a humour to be sneered at this morning.'

'Sneered at, because I called you Apollo? Why, you are the best-looking fellow I know. Honest admiration, my boy. I wish I was as young and good-looking. When are you going to wed the fair cousin?'

'Oh, never you mind about that. I've come on particular business.'

'Which of course means money, dear boy. Take a cigarette. Always willing to oblige if I can; but you ought not to want coin now, situated as you are.'

'A lot you know how I'm situated,' said Brant, beginning to smoke.

'Yes, I know a great deal, my dear fellow: how you sit yonder in the seat of the usurper. I say, though, seriously, as your friend, are you pretty secure?'

'Who's to interfere with me?'

'To be sure, who is? Your uncle left no papers.'

'How do you know?'

Levvinson laughed. 'My dear boy, why should I tell you how I know. Let it suffice that I do know, especially how your cousin stands with regard to that great business. Now, then, don't go and say I am not your friend. Here is a good bit of advice.'

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'Thankye,' snorted Brant.

'You have not heard it yet. You must play high, my dear boy; don't rest till you've married the cousin. Make sure of your position while you can.'

'I know what I'm about,' said Brant sharply.

'I don't know so much about that. If you were quite secure, you would not be obliged to come to me for money.'

'Who said I had come to you for money?'

'I did, because you never visit me unless you are hard up.'

'Well, I'm hard up enough now. Look here, Levvinson. How about those papers?'

'What; your notes of hand?' said Levvinson carelessly.

'No; those plans and drawings for the motor.'

'Motor? Motor? I don't know anything about any motor.'

'Oh yes, you do. No humbug. Look in your cheque-book if you want to refresh your memory.'

'My memory's fresh enough without a reminder, my dear boy. Oh, I see now, I think. No, you can't mean those drawings of some impossible contrivance which you came here one day to persuade me to buy.'

'Persuade to buy!' cried Brant contemptuously. 'Oh no: of course not: I couldn't mean those, could I?'

'My dear sarcastic young friend, what are you aiming at?' said Levvinson.

'Look here; who did you want those things for? It must have been for some one who could pay highly.'

'My dear Brant Dalton, you are a strange fellow. You ought to know me by this time. I have business matters with many people. They are perfectly private during the negotiations, and as soon as they are over, they are dead and buried, and I do not set up stones over their graves so as to find them again.'

'Well, you'll have to over that business, for there's a blow-up.'

'Indeed?' said Levvinson. 'Pray be explicit if you want to ask my advice.'

'I don't want to beg for your advice; I only came to tell you that I'm not going to take the blame. If the worst comes to the worst, I shall turn Queen's evidence, and tell the truth.'

'You could not, my dear Brant?' said Levvinson with a peculiar smile.

'Sneering again,' snarled Brant. 'Oh yes, I could tell the truth if I liked.'

'Tell it to me then now, my dear boy. What do you mean?'

'Here you have it, then: government has found out that the secret plans they bought of my uncle's patent have been copied and sold to some foreign power.'

Levvinson looked serious now.

'Of course, you don't know anything about that, eh? Not you, Levvinson?'

'Well, suppose government has found out that, my dear boy, what then?'

'They've sent in a formal demand to us for an explanation, and given hints that they don't mean to stand any nonsense. I don't quite understand what they could do, and whether they have the power to turn nasty and prosecute. I'm not a lawyer. But I give you fair warning that I shall hedge if you can't see your way out of it. I'm not going to stand in the dock on a charge of fraud.'

'Pooh, pooh!'

'Don't you be in too great a hurry with your "pooh, pooh." I don't say they could prosecute, but they might. One thing is certain; they'll want all their money back. Who was it bought the drawings?'

'I do not know anything about the business, my dear Brant,' said Levvinson quietly; 'but as a friend, if you are in a mess, I will try and help you out.'

'Thank you,' said Brant sarcastically. 'You mean with yourself. Of course you are deep in the mess.'

'My dear boy, I don't accept the position. Government may bluster and threaten, but I doubt very much whether they would care to take any very serious steps about such a matter. I am not prepared to say that it is a fraud.'

'Oh, aren't you? Well, I know somebody who is.'

'Indeed! But there is no harm in my advising you, or in our taking a business-like view of the matter.'

'None at all,' said Brant dryly.

'To begin, then: government say that the plans they purchased of some patent invention from your firm have been copied and sold to a foreign state.'

'Yes. What foreign state?' cried Brant.

'Let us keep to the position, my dear Brant Dalton. Well then, these documents must have been copied and sold by some one in your office, or else by some one in the government's employ.'

'By George! I never thought of that,' said Brant excitedly.

'No,' said Levvinson quietly. 'You would probably have not thought of that. The temptation would have been very great to some poorly paid government clerk.'

'To be sure,' cried Brant. 'I say! Bravo! That's the card to play. Let them prove that it wasn't done there. They wouldn't dare to fight.'

'Steady, my dear boy, steady. You are too impulsive. Let us analyse the matter thoroughly, and take the first possibility again, sift it, and if necessary come back to this second suggestion.'

'Oh, very well,' said Brant impatiently; 'but look sharp: I'm no analyser.'

'No: I found that out years ago, my dear Brant Dalton. But now, look here.—Take another cigarette; I know you like mine.—Now then, you don't think there is any one in your office likely to play such a trick as this?'

Brant looked at him curiously, in silence.

'I see you do,' continued Levvinson, after a careful scrutiny of his visitor's face. 'Of course it couldn't be that Mr Wynyan of yours—the man who half invented it.'

Brant gazed at the speaker searchingly, and then in a hoarse whisper: 'I say, Levvinson, what's your little game?'

The money-lender raised his eyebrows a trifle, and then smiled.

'Surely, my dear boy, it is clear enough—to save your firm any little unpleasantry that might occur.'

'And yourself?'

'I am talking about you, my dear boy—the head of the firm who entered into a contract with the government. But I see; you do suspect this Wynyan.'

'Curse him! I charged him with doing it,' said Brant viciously. 'He had the papers away for days. It's as black as night against him.'

'Hah!' ejaculated Levvinson, sinking back in his chair; and the man's manner was so peculiar that it took Brant's attention.

'What do you mean by "Hah?"' he said roughly.

'It was only a sigh of relief, my dear boy. We will not discuss the government-clerk idea—the position of the virtuous but ill-paid and tempted government servant. That will do to hold in reserve. There, be at rest, my dear boy, I will get you out of the difficulty. Of course you will not retain Mr Wynyan in your service?'

'Likely!'

'One moment: has he any hold upon you?'

'No,' cried Brant; 'the papers were to have been signed last week, but I had the matter put off.'

'My dear boy, you have all the makings of a business man in you. I am very glad you came to me. Stop: second thoughts are best. Where is this Wynyan?'

'Goodness knows; I got rid of him pretty sharply.'

'Quite right. Then now look here: have you replied to government?'

'No. But I shall now, and tell them I've found the culprit,' said Brant with a laugh.

'No: second thoughts are best. You must not give yourself away. We'll bring up the reserve at once. You shall write them an indignant letter, saying that you feel ready to doubt that such a shameful robbery has taken place; but if it has, you must hold the government accountable for what will prove a serious loss to your firm, for the robbery must have been made by some one in their own employ, through their carelessness in not keeping the papers private.'

'By George, Levvinson!' cried Brant, 'you are a clever one. It would take some brains to beat you.'

'Thank you, my dear boy. You are very flattering. Don't you try to beat me. Be off now, and get your letter carefully written, copied, and despatched at once. You feel better, don't you?'

'Right as the mail,' cried Brant, as he went to the door. 'I'll come and see you when I get their reply.'

'Do,' said Levvinson.

Then he walked back to his chair and seated himself again to sit back thinking and smiling to himself.

'Life is a curious mystery after all. How it is veined, netted, and made maze-like, full of threads and clews which come to those who are on the lookout. Yes, my dear Endoza—my beloved pure-blooded Castilian mongrel Greaser, Indian, or whatever it was—I think I can gratify you over the matter of the experienced brain-working engineer. Now let me see—what is the next step?'

MIGRATIONS OF FISH.

It would be difficult to name any other important industry in which greater progress in knowledge has been made during the last decade than in the sea fisheries. The scientific investigations undertaken in connection with them are very considerable. Much is now known concerning the life-histories and habits of fishes—concerning their food, propagation, development, and distribution; but on one point, in spite of all that has been written on the subject, there is still lamentable ignorance—that of their migrations. From the practical point of view, this is to be deemed a matter of especial regret. Definite information must needs be acquired ere several modern fishery problems can be rightly understood, and further regulation of the fisheries effected, the necessity for which becomes year by year more obvious.

For centuries—it can hardly be wondered at—the movements of the herring have attracted attention, and almost numberless plausible theories have been promulgated, most of which time has shown to be erroneous. Indeed, we seem to know little more of the subject than our fathers did. They long cherished the notion—the so-called 'icy-sea' or polar theory, a theory worked out with extraordinary minuteness—that the herring was bred in the Arctic seas, and that dense shoals, led by a large fish, 'the king,' came south early in the year, and, after travelling along various coasts, returned the same year to where they started from. When, towards the close of the last century, it was discovered that herrings spawned off our coasts, and remained here at certain spots throughout the winter, our ancestors merely divided the fish into two classes, and spoke of 'foreign' and of 'home-bred' herrings, and it was only somewhat late in the present century that the original theory was finally discarded. Until quite recently it has been the belief current among competent authorities that herrings do not, as a rule, wander far, but simply disperse into deeper water, and, similarly, that flat-fish do not travel to any considerable distance. General ideas, no less than mistaken theories, however elaborate, must always influence the fisheries injuriously, and a few years ago the Fishery Board for Scotland, with the view of settling the question, inaugurated a series of experiments and careful observations, the results of which are decidedly interesting.

For the purposes of experiment the Commissioners adopted the plan of catching fish, marking them, and returning them to the sea: notice of what was being done was given along the coast, and fishermen were offered a small reward for restoring any of the marked fish to the investigators. As regards those dealt with, lively and active ones are selected, and, of course, a record is kept of the date and hour, the locality, the kind of fish, its size, &c. At first, difficulty was experienced in ascertaining how the fish could be treated so as to make the marking capable of indicating these necessary particulars. It had to be permanent, such as should injure the creature as little as possible, and be inexpensive, since large numbers had to be handled; moreover, it must be conspicuous enough not to escape the eye of those who catch the fish, and yet sufficiently unobservable to elude the gaze of enemies. Pigment was tried, but proved unsatisfactory in many ways, and it was then decided to utilise a label or tag, bearing a number. After trial of gutta-percha, pieces of leather, india-rubber, lead, copper, zinc, brass, the last-named was eventually chosen as the substance best suited to resist the action of the sea; and thin brass circular discs, three-quarters of an inch in diameter, were manufactured, each stamped with a consecutive number, and pierced with a small hole at opposite sides by which it could be fastened to the fish's tail. Thin aluminium wire was inserted, but although sea-water does not corrode aluminium, it renders it brittle, and it breaks; certainly not one of the five hundred ticket-of-leave fish have ever reported themselves. Black silk cord was next employed, and answers well, resisting the action of the water for at least over two years.

But while this method has been pronounced admirably adapted for tracing the migrations of the food-fishes, it is disadvantageous, in that the ligature, by causing abrasion, retards materially the natural growth. This was to be avoided, since the experiments, in their secondary character, throw light on the important subject of the rate of growth of fishes; and in order, if possible, to prevent the mischief, tiny oblong discs of aluminium and silver were experimentally affixed to the outer surface of the opercular covering of fish in the tanks; but even these were found to check development, and, besides, all the discs came off. Lately, another mode, less irritating it is presumed than the cord round the tail, has been tried, by securely fixing a small oblong brass tag to the shank of a small fish-hook, and embedding the latter in the thick fleshy part of the back.

To many persons, doubtless the question will suggest itself, whether the presence of a foreign body in contact with the skin, such as the brass disc and cord, will not interfere with the normal migratory movements of the fish. In the opinion of Dr Wemyss Fulton, Superintendent of the investigations, it does not. This conclusion he bases on the fact that in some cases the marked fish have remained long at about the same place, while in other cases specimens of the same species have gone a good distance; and so far as can be judged, the irritation in both cases was equal.

Since the experiments were begun, some five years back, no fewer than between three and four thousand fishes, belonging to over twenty kinds, have been caught, marked, and set free in the sea, chiefly in the Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay. One thousand two hundred and fifty were plaice, of which 103 were recovered, the period of freedom varying from two days to two and a quarter years, with a mean of 239 days, or eight months. Measured in a straight line, the average number of miles between the points of liberation and recapture may be put down at six, but ranges from practically *nil* to 28; clearly, in the interval the fish may, and indeed almost must, have travelled much farther, but there is nothing to indicate the extent of this journeying. Two points of interest come out in these experiments: the comparative stationariness of immature plaice, and the fact that those that move do so very largely in a definite direction. In the Firth of Forth, it appears, they circulate as it were, along the south shore westwards and along the north shore outwards or eastwards; and round St Andrews Bay this movement is continued with even greater distinctness to the north. Plaice, it would therefore seem, tend to remain within the inshore waters during the time of immaturity, and their movement is, as a rule, slow, but in a definite direction. To complete the cycle of life and habit of this valuable flat-fish: the spawning grounds lie off the mouth of the Forth and St Andrews Bay, the buoyant ova are floated inwards, and the young distribute themselves in the shallower waters after the fashion described, and in their turn, on approaching maturity, pass out to the spawning grounds; those from the Firth of Forth, apparently, generally speaking, by the channel between the Isle of May and the coast of Fife, and those from St Andrews Bay in all likelihood proceed from the neighbourhood of the mouth of the Tay towards the Bell Rock.

A study of the tabulated results of the experiments on another flat-fish, the common dab, brings out a striking contrast in its migrations to the migrations of the plaice. Of 337 dabs marked and liberated, 11 were recaught. The average distance was 14 miles—some travelled three and some 37—in a mean period of 178 days. They are therefore much more active than the plaice, going considerable distances in comparatively short periods. They are freer in their movements; in fact they appear to be erratic, exhibiting none of that regularity which is so characteristic of the plaice; the dab travels in any direction, offshore or inshore, or along the coast. Not only have the young no specially localised habitat, but spawning occurs indifferently within or without the territorial waters.

Ten out of 196 codlings were again captured, and in their case the mean period of freedom was 74 days, and the difference of the extent of their movement remarkable, the distance varying from one to 52 miles. One codling travelled only a mile in 33 days, another a mile and a half in 200 days; on the other hand, one went 22 miles in 27 days, and another no less than 52 miles in 69 days, from the Firth of Forth to Dunnottar Castle, near Stonehaven, Kincardineshire. Thus codling may stay for a length of time at about the same place, or they may travel long distances with considerable speed; and there seems to be no regularity in the direction, as with the plaice.

The only other marked fish obtained were one lemon sole out of 173, one turbot out of four, two thornbacks from among 71, and one gray skate amongst 23. Unfortunately, none of the long rough dabs, the haddocks, the gurnards, or the anglers replaced came to hand. Many fishes were taken which bore evidences of having once carried the label; but they had succeeded in getting rid of the means of their identification.

THE IRISH RAJAH OF HARIÁNA.

A ROMANTIC EPISODE IN INDIAN HISTORY.

During the later half of the eighteenth century, India was the happy hunting-ground of the European adventurer. It was easy for any dashing soldier of fortune, however humble his origin, however slight his smattering of military knowledge, providing he were acquainted with the rudiments of European discipline and drill, to ingratiate himself with one or other of the numerous independent native sovereigns, and if he played his cards well, he might attain almost unlimited influence and wealth.

The careers of some of these adventurers were singularly romantic, and none more so than that of the remarkable man who is the hero of our present story—George Thomas, sometime of the county Tipperary, and later, Rajah of Hariána.

It was in the year 1781 that George Thomas, then quartermaster on board an English man-of-war, landed in Madras. The son of a small farmer, he had risen from a common sailor to his present position; but rapid as his rise in the service had been—for he was only five-and-twenty—it had by no means kept pace with his ambition. His adventurous, daring spirit had been fired by the accounts he had heard and read of the immense wealth of the Indian princes, and the boundless opportunities for advancement which their rivalries and contentions offered to any man of mettle who had the courage and the brains to carve a way to glory with his sword.

Long before the ship dropped anchor off Madras, George Thomas had resolved to take the earliest opportunity of deserting, and following the career to which his ambition beckoned him. Two days after his arrival there, the bold Irishman disappeared, and his shipmates never saw him again.

For five years George Thomas served his apprenticeship as a soldier of fortune among the petty Hindu chiefs of the Carnatic and the Deccan. Having gained some money and a good deal of experience of native manners, customs, and character, the ambitious Irishman determined to plunge into the heart of India and seek a wider field for the exercise of his talents. He made straight for Delhi, the capital of the Great Moguls, and the centre of Mohammedan influence and intrigue in India. There he fell in with the extraordinary woman who was so strangely mixed up with his future career—the Begum Somru.

The Begum was at that time an independent sovereign under the protection of the Court of Delhi. Her history was remarkable and romantic. She was a native of Cashmere, and had come to Delhi as a dancing-girl. Among the many admirers of her beauty was a European adventurer, known as Somru Sahib, who was then high in favour with the Great Mogul. His real name was Walter Reinhard, and he was a native of the Electorate of Trèves; but his French comrades had nicknamed him 'Sombre,' in allusion to his dark complexion and still darker character, and this had been corrupted into Somru in the vernacular. Reinhard was but a ship's carpenter on a French man-of-war when he first came to India; but by his great natural gifts as soldier and organiser, he had risen to be commander-in-chief of the armies of Meer Cossim, the Nawab of Bengal. When Meer Cossim was deposed by the English, Somru, who had stained his fame as a gallant soldier by the brutal massacre of one hundred and fifty English prisoners at Patna, was compelled to flee for his life, and was hunted from court to court, till he found refuge in Delhi, where his services were gladly accepted. He was granted the province of Sardhána, with the title of Rajah, and an annual revenue of six lakhs of rupees (£60,000) for the maintenance of himself and the fine corps of Sepoys which he had raised and disciplined, and which owned no leader but himself.

Fascinated by the beautiful Cashmerian dancing-girl, Somru married her, and she took the title of Begum. She was a woman as remarkable for her talents as for her beauty, and soon gained complete ascendency over her husband. For the fierce and reckless mercenary, destitute alike of faith and honour, had one soft spot in his hard nature, and the Begum found it.

On his death in 1778, he bequeathed her all his property and the command of his corps of Sepoys. She proved herself as capable a leader as her husband had been. More than once, mounted on her Persian thoroughbred, she led her men into action under a heavy fire; and their devotion to her was enthusiastic. But outside the ranks of her faithful Sepoys she was more feared than loved. The people of the Deccan believed her to be a witch.

In person she was small, with a graceful, softly rounded figure, a complexion of dazzling fairness, large black eyes full of animation, delicately chiselled features, and a hand and arm of such perfect symmetry that native poets sang of them as matchless wonders of beauty. Her dress was always in exquisite taste, and of the costliest material. She spoke Persian and Hindustani fluently. Her manners were charming, and her conversation spirited, sensible, and engaging. But, as a set-off to this long array of personal attractions, her character was detestable. She was cruel, vindictive, and treacherous. If one of her servants displeased or disobeyed her, she would order his nose and ears to be cut off in her presence, and watch the mutilation with gusto, whilst she placidly smoked her hookah.

When one of her dancing-girls offended her by attracting the attention of a favourite officer, she, in a fit of furious jealousy, ordered the unfortunate girl to be buried alive. There was a small vault under the pavement of the saloon in which the nautch-dances were held; and in that vault the Begum saw her victim bricked up. When the horrible work was done, she commanded the rest of the nautch-girls to come out and dance over the grave in which their still living sister was entombed. According to one account (denied by some of those who have investigated the story), the Begum, that she might extract the last drops of fiendish pleasure out of the cup of revenge, had her couch placed exactly over the vault.

The Begum Somru was a little over thirty when George Thomas arrived at her court. The gallant Irishman flattered her vanity by his undisguised admiration of her charms, but in reality, she was more struck with him than he with her. His tall, commanding figure, his erect and martial carriage, his bold, handsome features, his plausible Irish tongue, and his fascinating Irish manners took the fancy of the Begum. She gave him a most gracious reception, and offered him a high post in her service. Thomas accepted the offer, and soon proved himself so capable an officer that the Begum made him commander-in-chief of her forces.

It was not long before the Irish adventurer had an opportunity of displaying his generalship. There was a revolution in Delhi. Shah Alum, the ruling prince, was driven from his throne and capital by an upstart named Ghorlama Kadir, who had the impudence to ask the Begum to be his wife and share with him the crown of the Great Moguls. The offer was scornfully rejected, and the Begum at once set off to the assistance of her old friend and ally, with a force of five battalions of Sepoys, two hundred Europeans, mostly Frenchmen, and forty guns; the whole under the command of George Thomas.

Shah Alum was making his last stand against the usurper, and the fortunes of war were going heavily against him, when the Begum Somru in her palanquin at the head of her army arrived upon the field of battle. By his brilliant generalship and the steady valour of his splendidly trained Sepoys, George Thomas turned defeat into victory. The rebels were routed, the usurper was slain, and Shah Alum was securely re-established on his throne. In gratitude for the timely aid of the Begum Somru, Shah Alum, in full durbar, presented her with a magnificent necklace of diamonds, took her by the hand, and before the assembled notables, addressed her as his beloved daughter. Nor was the valour of her general overlooked. George Thomas received a large present in money, a jewelled sword, and the warmest expressions of admiration and gratitude for his services.

The star of the lucky Irishman was now in the ascendant. He became the Begum's principal adviser, her Grand Vizier, in fact. He married a beautiful slave-girl whom she had adopted as her daughter, and was regarded as her certain successor in the sovereignty of Sardhána.

Then the Begum began to repent of having allowed the handsome Irishman to marry any one but herself. Mad with jealousy, she tried to induce Thomas to get rid of his wife; but he was fond of his beautiful slave-girl, and had no mind to exchange her for the Begum, whose beauty was on the wane, and whose temper was that of a tigress.

At this juncture another remarkable person appeared upon the scene, who was destined to play an important part in the Sardhána drama. The new arrival was a Neapolitan named Levassoo, or Le Vassoult, a handsome, clever adventurer, who rapidly gained an extraordinary influence over the fickle Begum. He was undoubtedly a man of ability, but stern, haughty, and domineering. His arrogance disgusted all the officers in the Begum's service; and when she carried her infatuation for the stranger so far as to marry him, most of them prepared to leave her court. Among these was George Thomas.

It was impossible that one small state should hold two such men as the Irishman and the Neapolitan. They were the deadliest rivals. George Thomas felt that his influence in Sardhána was gone. He knew that the Begum and Le Vassoult were plotting his assassination. It was time for him to go; so he went, taking with him his own special regiment of two hundred and fifty picked cavalrymen. A neighbouring Mahratta prince granted him a tract of territory for himself and his men, on condition of having their services if required.

But Thomas knew very well that, if he wished to keep his troopers together, he must give them plunder, and as his late mistress, the Begum, owed him large arrears of pay, he levied contributions on some of her outlying dominions.

Le Vassoult, glad of an excuse to crush his hated rival, took prompt measures to avenge this outrage, and marched against Thomas at the head of the Begum's army. But before the rivals met, dissension and mutiny had done their work amongst the Begum's troops. The jealous and imperious Neapolitan had quarrelled with the only competent commander left in the Begum's service after Thomas's departure. This man, a native of Liége, was an excellent soldier and popular with the troops, but he was a personal friend of Thomas's, and that rendered him obnoxious to Le Vassoult, who insulted and degraded him. The Liégeois, in revenge, fostered the spirit of mutiny already smouldering among the men, and, at a preconcerted signal, the bulk of the Begum's army, instead of marching against their old leader Thomas, revolted, elected the Liégeois their commander, and announced their intention of deposing the Begum and placing a son of Somru by a previous wife upon the throne.

The Begum was captured when attempting to escape from her palace. Her palanquin was surrounded by rebel soldiers before Le Vassoult, who was on horseback at the head of a few followers, could reach her. He gathered his handful of cavalry together for a charge. Some shots were exchanged, and there would soon have been a bloody *mêlée* had not the Begum suddenly diverted attention to herself.

Rising in her palanquin, she drew a poniard, plunged it into her breast, and with a shriek, fell back bleeding. Her horrified attendants screamed 'Help! help! she has stabbed herself,' and there was a general rush to the palanquin.

Le Vassoult, who, whatever his faults may have been, was passionately fond of his wife, reined in his horse and asked what had happened. He was told that the Begum had stabbed herself, but he did not seem to comprehend the reply. He repeated the question: the answer was the same.

'Stabbed herself!' he muttered; then, without another word, drew a pistol from his holster, placed it to his forehead, fired, and fell dead from his saddle.

The most picturesque version of this somewhat apocryphal story affirms that before the Begum and Le Vassoult left Sardhána they had made a compact that if either were slain, the other would not survive. And the enemies of the Begum declared that she, knowing that her husband's romantic disposition and devoted attachment to her would keep him true to his vow, deliberately pretended to commit suicide in order to free herself from the man whom she saw to be the obstacle in the way of regaining the good-will of her subjects. She merely drew the point of the poniard sharply across her neck so as to bring blood, and her clever acting did the rest!

A prisoner in the hands of her mutinous soldiery, with no one to whom she could turn for help or advice, the Begum in her despair bethought herself of the gallant Irishman who had served her so well and whom she had treated so badly. She contrived to send George Thomas a message, abjectly imploring his forgiveness and entreating him to come to her assistance, as she was in hourly dread of being poisoned or stabbed. She would gladly pay any price he might choose to ask for his services.

When was an Irish gentleman ever known to refuse the request of a lady in distress? George Thomas chivalrously forgot and forgave all the treachery of his late mistress and hurried to her assistance. His rapid advance terrified the mutineers, who knew well of what stuff their old leader was made. They promptly deserted the usurper they had set up, and rallied again round their lawful sovereign. The Begum Somru was reinstated before her gallant and generous deliverer came in sight of Sardhána. On his arrival she received him in state and overwhelmed him with gratitude. All her arts and fascinations were brought into play to induce the brave Irishman to become once more her Grand Vizier. But George Thomas was proof against all her blandishments. He had had experience of her treacherous nature, and had no mind to trust himself again within the reach of this beautiful, velvet-eyed tigress. She professed to be deeply affected at his departure, but she hated him more fiercely than ever because he had rejected her overtures, and she showed him before long that

> Hell has no fury like a woman scorned.

By this time our Irish adventurer was tired of serving for pay and being liable at any moment to dismissal at the caprice of an irresponsible ruler. His military fame was great, he had a band of devoted followers whom he had trained into splendid soldiers, the great Mahratta chiefs were eager to purchase his alliance—why should he not set up as a Rajah himself? The idea pleased him, and he proceeded to carry it into execution. He had little difficulty in fixing upon a territory to govern. There was one ready to his hand—a sort of No-Man's-Land, which had been seized by one adventurer after another, but never held for any length of time, and for some years had been absolutely without a ruler.

The province on which George Thomas had set his eye was known as Hariána or the Green Country, and was nominally a portion of the dominions of the Great Mogul, who still kept up a shadowy state at Delhi. It extended one hundred and twenty miles from north to south, and about the same distance from east to west. Thither George Thomas marched his compact little army, took formal possession of the country, assumed the title of Rajah, and selected the town of Hansi, ninety miles west of Delhi, as his capital.

The new Rajah of Hariána soon showed that he was of a different type from its former rulers, who had been freebooters pure and simple. He commenced by pulling down and entirely rebuilding the city of Hánsi—making it not only a strong fortress, but also a commodious town. He granted liberal concessions to merchants and traders as an inducement to settle there; he established a mint and coined his own money; he procured skilled workmen and artificers from Delhi and elsewhere, and set them to construct an arsenal, where he cast cannon and manufactured muskets, gunpowder, and all munitions of war. For he meant to be the Rajah of a strong, independent, flourishing, civilised state.

But this was only a part, and a small part, of his ambition. After he had got his foot firmly planted in his new dominions, he intended to make Hariána a starting-point from which to conquer the whole of the Punjab, not for himself, but for Great Britain. He desired, to use his own words, 'to have the honour of planting the British standard on the banks of the Attock.'

Like a true Irishman, George Thomas revelled in hard fighting, and he soon had plenty of it on his hands. His warlike neighbours the Sikhs resented the new Rajah's marauding forays into their country and made reprisals. But they soon found that they had caught a Tartar in this fighting Irishman. Nothing could afford better proof of Thomas's high qualities as a soldier than his victorious campaigns against the Sikhs, that splendid race of warriors, who, forty years later, proved themselves the most formidable foes that England has ever had to fight in India. Yet the Irish Rajah of Hariána, with his little army of five thousand men and thirty-six guns, defeated the Sikhs over and over again, forced them to pay him an indemnity of two million rupees, and could proudly boast that he was 'Dictator in all the countries belonging to the Sikhs south of the river Sutlej.'

We have little doubt that the Irish Rajah would not only have subdued the Sikhs, but have carried out his great scheme for the conquest of the Punjab, had not his attention been distracted from it by the dangers which threatened his own sovereignty.

The brilliant successes of the Rajah of Hariána against the Sikhs had roused the jealousy of a rival adventurer, a French soldier named Perron, who commanded the armies of Sindhia, the great chief of the Mahrattas. Perron hinted to his master that this Irish upstart was becoming far too powerful and ambitious, and that, if not taken in hand at once, he might some day prove a thorn in the side of Sindhia. The treacherous Begum Somru, too, who was burning for revenge on the man who had slighted her charms, though he had saved her life and restored her to her throne, contrived to instil into the mind of the Mahratta prince suspicions which served to confirm the hints thrown out by Perron. The consequence was that, when the Sikhs prayed Sindhia to assist them against their dreaded foe, the Rajah of Hariána, Sindhia seized the excuse to crush the aspiring foreigner.

But first he tried diplomacy. If Thomas would surrender his sovereignty, and submit to be the vassal of Sindhia, he should be allowed an annual subsidy for the support of himself and his troops.

In the month of September 1801, Perron and Thomas met at Bahadurgarh to discuss these proposals. The Frenchman's tone offended the Irishman's pride, and he haughtily rejected the conditions offered, though he well knew that his refusal meant war to the knife with Sindhia.

On hearing of Thomas's contemptuous rejection of his terms, the Mahratta prince ordered Perron to despatch a force at once to annihilate the troublesome Rajah of Hariána.

The invading army was under the command of a Frenchman, Major Louis Bourguien, a braggart and poltroon, despised by his officers and men. Thomas turned to bay under the walls of his fortress of Georgegarh. He was not greatly outnumbered as yet, for he had six thousand men with thirty-five guns against eight thousand men with thirty-eight guns. After a fierce and obstinate battle, in which Bourguien lost nearly half his force, Thomas remained master of the field. But his loss, too, was severe, upwards of one thousand eight hundred, including his second in command, Captain Hopkins, a brilliant English soldier, whose death was an irreparable misfortune. Had Thomas taken advantage of his victory and pressed Bourguien hard, there can be no doubt that Sindhia's army must have been annihilated, for it was utterly demoralised by the reverse it had sustained, and the foolish Frenchman was quite incapable of restoring order or confidence. But the Irish Rajah seemed suddenly to have lost his head. All his old promptitude of action and fertility of resource appeared to have left him. Not only did he neglect to follow up his victory, but he made no attempt to secure his retreat to Hánsi. For fifteen precious days he remained absolutely idle. It is said that the death of his wife, to whom he was strongly attached, had strangely affected him, and that he drank heavily to drown his sorrow. Whatever the cause, his inaction was fatal to him. Within three weeks of the battle of Georgegarh, Sindhia had thrown an army of thirty thousand men and one hundred and ten guns into Hariána, and Thomas was hemmed in at Georgegarh by a ring of foes, among the fiercest and foremost of whom were the forces of the Begum Somru.

As the toils closed more and more tightly around him, Thomas recovered his old dauntless spirit. He defended himself with desperate courage against these overwhelming odds, till he saw that the game was up. Then in the pitch darkness of a November night, at the head of three hundred horsemen, he dashed out from Georgegarh, cut his way through the battalions of the enemy, and, after riding one hundred and twenty miles in twenty-four hours, arrived safely at Hánsi.

The garrison of Georgegarh surrendered; but so devoted were they to their Irish chief, that they refused with contempt to serve under Sindhia or any one else. Several of the native officers rent their clothes, and swore that they would rather live as beggars than serve again as soldiers under any chief but their own Rajah.

Bourguien lost no time in advancing upon Hánsi. Though his own ignorance and cowardice utterly unfitted him to command an army, he had excellent subordinates on whom he could rely. Among these were half-a-dozen English officers, one of whom, Lieutenant James Skinner, was afterwards celebrated as the founder of 'Skinner's Horse,' the famous 'Yellow Boys.'

Hánsi was closely invested, but with such skill and courage did Thomas defend his last stronghold that the besiegers made very little progress. The city indeed was stormed and taken after a desperate hand-to-hand fight, in which the assailants lost nearly two thousand men; but the citadel, which commanded the town, was still held by Thomas, and held so stoutly, that the Frenchman, despairing of ever taking the place by fair means, had recourse to foul. Flights of arrows were shot over the walls of the fort, with letters attached to them promising the garrison six months' pay and permanent service in the army of Sindhia, if they would deliver up their Rajah and the fortress.

The English officers were indignant with Bourguien for resorting to treachery, and constantly urged him to offer the Irish commander honourable terms. At last, one day, after tiffin, when wine had put Bourguien in a good temper, he said, in reply to their reiterated protests: 'Well, gentlemen, do as you like. He be one damned Englishman, your own countryman. You know him better than I do.'

So Captain Smith, the senior English officer, was sent to offer such terms of capitulation as no man of honour and spirit need be ashamed to accept. The Irishman was at his last gasp. Famine and treachery were slowly but surely undermining the fidelity of his troops. He knew his case to be desperate, and he therefore consented to surrender Hánsi and evacuate Hariána on these conditions: that the garrison should be allowed to march out with the honours of war; that he himself should go free, with all his private property, and be escorted by a battalion of Sepoys until he was safely within the territories of the English East India Company.

The conditions were granted, the treaty of surrender was signed, and the irrepressible Thomas was entertained that night at a banquet given by Bourguien and his officers. The Frenchman vied with the Irishman in quaffing bumpers, and after a drunken quarrel, during which the mad Tipperary 'bhoy' chased the terrified Bourguien round the banqueting tent with a drawn sword, they swore eternal friendship, wept in one another's arms, and finally the ex-Rajah of Hariána was escorted back to Hánsi at daybreak in a most undignified state of inebriety.

The conditions of surrender were faithfully carried out, and George Thomas turned his back upon his Rajahship of Hariána for ever. He had saved out of the wreck of his affairs about £25,000—enough, as he said, to enable him to end his days comfortably as a small squire in Ireland; and he was on his way to Calcutta to take ship for England, when he was seized with fever at Berhampore, and, weakened as he was by his drunken habits, died there on the 22d of August 1802, at the age of forty-six.

The son of a Tipperary peasant, with little or no education, had risen to be an independent sovereign, had built cities, commanded armies, conquered vast territories, dictated terms to powerful princes, and proved himself a capable ruler as well as a brilliant soldier. Surely, then, we are justified in the assertion that among the careers of military adventurers few have been more successful and none more romantic than that of George Thomas, the Irish Rajah of Hariána.

SOME MODERN USES OF GLASS.

According to Pliny, the discovery of glass, like many another article that has proved of immense benefit to mankind, was entirely fortuitous. A merchant ship laden with nitre (a fossil alkali) being driven ashore on the coast of Galilee in 77 A.D., the crew went ashore for provisions, which they cooked by the water's edge, constructing a rough support for their utensils out of pieces of their cargo, which produced a vitrification of the sand beneath the fire, and afforded the hint for the manufacture of glass.

Moralising upon this tradition, which he evidently believed, Cuvier wrote: 'It could not be expected that those Phœnician sailors who saw the sand of the shores of Bœtica transformed by fire into a transparent glass, should have at once foreseen that this new substance would prolong the pleasures of sight to the old; that it would one day assist the astronomer in penetrating the depths of the heavens, and in numbering the stars of the Milky Way; that it would lay open to the naturalist a miniature world, as populous, as rich in wonders, as that which alone seemed to have been granted to his senses and his contemplation: in fine, that the most simple and direct use of it would enable the inhabitants of the coast of the Baltic Sea to build palaces more magnificent than those of Tyre and Memphis, and to cultivate, almost under the polar circle, the most delicious fruits of the torrid zone.'

Since his death in 1832, how the field of its usefulness has expanded! Visitors to the late Chicago Exhibition could not fail to have noticed several offices, workshops, and stores constructed entirely of hollow glass bricks, to which a highly decorative effect was given by using bricks of variegated colour, joined with a colourless cement, and which, when lit from within by the electric light, presented a fairy-like aspect, unapproached by structures of glass and iron, such as our Crystal Palace. They need not, however, have travelled so far to see an erection of this nature, for a glass factory at Liverpool has glass journal-boxes for all its machinery, a glass floor, glass shingles on the roof, and a chimney one hundred and five feet high, built wholly of glass bricks, each a foot square.

Several patents for roofing-glass have been taken out during the last few years, the best perhaps being that in which, during manufacture, the glass is moulded upon steel-wire netting, which greatly increases its strength without appreciably lessening its transparency, and allows of its being used in much larger sheets. A Paris firm of glassmakers, MM. Apert Frères, now produce some porous glass to be used for window-panes. The pores are too fine to admit of draught, but cause a pleasant and healthy ventilation in a room. By means of the toughening process, glass railway-sleepers, tram-rails, floor-plates, grindstones, &c., have been produced.

Last year some remarkable experiments were carried out by the Berlin fire brigade upon a patent fire-resisting glass, suitable for skylights, windows, and partitions, exhibited by Messrs Siemens of Dresden. It was proved to be capable of resisting a temperature of 1300° C. for over half an hour.

Articles of dress are now being extensively made of this material. A Venetian manufacturer is turning out bonnets by the thousand, the glass cloth of which they are composed having the same shimmer and brilliancy of colour as silk, and, what is a great advantage, being impervious to water. In Russia there has for a long time existed a tissue manufactured from the fibre of a peculiar filamentous stone from the Siberian mines, which by some secret process is shredded and spun into a fabric which, although soft to the touch and pliable in the extreme, is of so durable a nature that it never wears out. This is probably what has given an enterprising firm the idea of producing spun-glass dress lengths. The Muscovite stuff is thrown into the fire when dirty, like asbestos, by which it is made absolutely clean again; but the spun-glass silk is simply brushed with a hard brush and soap and water, and is none the worse for being either stained or soiled. The material is to be had in white, green, lilac, pink, and yellow, and bids fair to become very fashionable for evening dresses. An Austrian is the inventor of this novel fabric, which is rather costly. Table-cloths, napkins, and window-curtains are also made of it. It has also been discovered that glass is capable of being turned into a fine cloth, which can be worn next the skin without the slightest discomfort.

The Infanta Eulalie of Spain was a short time ago presented with a wonderful gown by the Libbey Cut Glass Company, of Toledo. 'Its foundation,' writes a lady correspondent of the *Daily News*, 'is a silk warp, woven with fine strands of glass. In each strand there are two hundred and fifty almost invisible threads, and to make three-quarters of a yard of this material employs four women one whole day. This curious fabric of mingled silk and glass is arranged as a gored skirt over one of white silk. It is bordered with a flounce of chiffon, partially veiled with a glittering fringe of glass. Above it is a twist of chiffon and plaited glass. The bodice is in silver cloth, woven in with threads of glass, and glass epaulets glimmer above the chiffon sleeves. The price of this ball dress is five hundred dollars. The Infanta's is pure white, but the glass can be made in a variety of colours, and can be so woven through the silk as to produce a shot effect. The seams have to be glued together instead of being sewn. The silvery sheen produced by the fine threads of glass is remarkably pretty, especially under the rays of artificial light.'

And while on the subject of dress, we may mention a most dangerous fashion that obtained a few years back, fortunately not to a very wide extent, and only for a short time—namely, sprinkling the hair, dresses, and flowers at balls, parties, and theatres with powdered glass. The inhalation of these minute particles of glass, one of the deadliest forms of slow poison, and perfectly insoluble, sets up serious inflammation in the pulmonary organs, stomach, throat, and other membranes to which it adheres; and, moreover, these grains injuriously affect the delicate structure of the eye. A letter setting forth the serious effects resulting from this practice at a Christmas gathering in Coventry, appeared in the *Standard* of 29th December 1888.

A church bell of green glass, fourteen inches high and thirteen in diameter, was placed in the turret of the chapel at the Grange, Borrowdale, in October 1859; and now we are told that glass is to be used as a filling for teeth, especially the front ones, where it will be less conspicuous than gold, and, in fact, indistinguishable from the tooth surface.

From time to time, glass has furnished the material for scientific toys. At the old-time fairs, 'Rupert's drops' formed a staple commodity, long pear-shaped drops, on breaking off the tiniest morsel of the surface of which the whole mass shattered itself into a thousand atoms. Charles II. was so delighted with them that he brought them to the notice of the Royal Society, who formed a committee to inquire into their nature. They also provided Hudibras with a simile:

> Honour is like that glassy bubble
> That finds philosophers such trouble;
> Whose least part cracked, the whole does fly,
> And wits are cracked to find out why.

Hooke, in his *Micrographia*, tells of candle-bombs, small glasses hermetically sealed and containing a drop of water, which, when placed on hot coals, burst with a loud report. Another curious article was the 'Bologna phial,' a hollow cup of annealed glass, capable, as are also the Rupert's drops before mentioned, of resisting hard strokes from without, but which shivers to pieces on certain light minute bodies being dropped into it. In some glass-houses the workmen show glass which has been cooled in the open air, on which they let fall leaden bullets without breaking it. They then desire you to drop a few grains of sand upon the glass, which break it into a thousand pieces. The lead does not scratch the surface, but the sharp and angular sand does sufficiently to produce the surprising result.

One of the most curious inventions of this inventive age is platinised glass. A piece of glass is coated with an exceedingly thin layer of a liquid charged with platinum, and is then raised to a red heat. The platinum becomes united to the glass in such a way as to form a very odd kind of mirror. The glass has not lost its transparency, yet if one places it against a wall and looks at it, he sees his image as in an ordinary looking-glass. But when light is allowed to pass through from the other side, as in a window-pane, it appears perfectly transparent like ordinary glass. By constructing a window of this material, one could stand close behind the panes, in an unilluminated room, and see clearly everything going on outside, while passers-by looking at the window would behold only a fine mirror, or set of mirrors, in which their own figures would be reflected and the person inside remain invisible. In France various tricks have been played. In one, a person, seeing what appears to be an ordinary mirror, approaches to look at himself. A sudden change in the mechanism sends light through the glass from the back, whereupon it instantly becomes transparent, and the startled spectator finds himself confronted by some grotesque figure which has been hidden behind the magic glass. What wonders might not a magician of the dark ages have wrought with a piece of platinised glass?

A COUNTRY LANE.

Between steep banks it winds along,
O'erhung with leafy hawthorn trees,
From which in Spring the thrush's song
Floats softly on the soft south breeze.
There is the earliest primrose found,
And modest purple violets grow,
And trembling wind-flowers star the ground,
And humble ragged robins blow.

There, too, on golden Summer eves,
The old folks like to stroll and talk;
Or slowly, under whispering leaves,
The self-absorbed young lovers walk,
While, fresh as youthful hopes, unfurl
New growths about their lingering feet;
And tender fronds of fern uncurl,
And all the balmy air is sweet

With mingled scents of thyme and musk,
And wilding-roses, passion-pale,
As trembles through the dewy dusk
The music of the nightingale.
And, stealing from some hidden nook,
Adown the lane and o'er the lea,
By pleasant ways, a silver brook
Runs, singing, to the silver sea.

E. Matheson.

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THE WINTER SHORE.

The sky which overarches the wide wet sea-sands is gray and dull, and the winds blow in gusts from the north-east. This is the same ample shore which shone golden in the summer sunlight, when a crowd of pleasure-seekers were exploring its beauty; and then the sky above it was of deepest blue, and the receding waves in the quivering sunshine broke gently on the sands 'like light dissolved in star-showers thrown.' But few indeed of those summer pleasure-seekers would now appreciate the shore in its stern aspect, that has, however, a rugged beauty of its own under the north-easter which Charles Kingsley sang. To share in the appreciation of that 'wild north-easter' and of the aspect of our winter shore, it is necessary to be a lover of really wild shooting and long rough walking, of the stern music of wind and wave, and the clanging seabird's cry in all its variety of note. For those who are thus constituted, our winter shore has a perennial charm, and has been the ample space where some of the most delightful experiences of open-air life have been obtained.

Far away at this hour of low-water extend the bare brown wet sands from the strip of shingle which runs below the base of the tall white cliffs, party-coloured here and there with patches of vegetation, down to a long dim line of foam which marks the restless waves. Winding across the bay, darker in hue than the sands, is a rain-swollen stream which comes from a source far inland. Now when revealed by the retreat of the sea, its slippery quagmire-like banks—of which the inexperienced wanderer had best beware—are a favourite and succulent feeding-ground for various birds. Tantalising enough some of these same birds—the shooter will find it one thing to see them, and a very different thing to approach them. From those distant banks comes fitfully the wild weird melancholy piping of the curlews, and the stately birds with their long curved bills are constantly flitting hither and thither by the stream, or boring in the soft sand on either side for the shellfish and other inmates of its tenacious surface. The curlews are among the most prized of the birds which are met with by the shore shooter; and—though it is not generally known—a young bird, when its food has been varied, is a delicacy if properly roasted. But the curlew matches the wood-pigeon and rook in its wariness in keeping out of range of a gun. Those handsome birds—their pale brown and black flecked upper plumage contrasting with the dull white underneath—are not to be approached by any stalking. The only plan whereby success can be obtained is by the shooter's concealing himself behind a rock, a post, or any remnant of wreckage scattered here and there on the sands, and there, in wary fashion, fluttering from time to time his cap or handkerchief. Curiosity gradually prompts the shy birds to approach nearer and circle round the object until they come within range, when a rapid shot may be successful. Our own experience of the bird on different winter shores is that they at any rate afford plenty of exercise and much scope for expectation, even if the bag be small, and such accompaniments form much of the enjoyment of sport to those who in its best sense understand the word.

The lapwings come wheeling with their constant monotonous cry in flocks from the open inland country, and are never far from the receding tide. In most instances, they are the common ones. Sometimes they settle like a flock of rooks on the wet sands, a rush of rapid wings and a storm of peewits showing when, in their opinion, the human intruder has got near enough to their assembly. Their love of the sands is more, it would seem, from love of the wide free space wherein those rapid wings can be exercised, for they get the greater part of their food from the downlands and fallow fields that lie far inland, and are night-feeders like some of the duck race. More rarely, and in smaller flocks, we see at this time the much daintier golden plover, so prized as a table bird. These are in the finest condition now. They fly fast and far, and in more vigorous fashion than their common relatives, from whom the practised eye finds it easy to distinguish them when on the wing. In frosty weather, golden plovers seek their food far out on the sands near the ripple of the tide-line, and the more wintry the weather, the greater the chance of approaching them, which must be in the most equable and cautious manner, and with the precaution of never moving the arms till the gun is raised to the shoulder. When first fired at, our plovers scatter in all directions, thus affording a fair chance for the second shot.

The rare gray plovers are sometimes seen, in hardest weather, on our winter shore, but not often. A dull dusky brown marks the head, back, and wing-coverts, the under-parts being white, and the legs green. They are more difficult to get near than either of the other kinds, being always shy and wary. After feeding, they delight in dabbling and washing in the hollows of the sands which are full of salt water; and very pretty is the contrast between their sober plumage and the green and crimson patches of sea-weed which often fleck the brown sand near such places. But certainly the dusky greenish-yellow hue of the golden plovers as they wheel in compact order under the flying sun-gleams that now and again are seen as the north-easter drives the gray clouds before it, make them one of the handsomest of the plover race.

The screaming of the gulls is the incessant accompaniment of the wild winds' music and the distant lapping of the waves. They dive, toss, and wheel in all directions; but no one who is really fit to carry a gun would ever fire at them. The large black-backed gulls keep apart from the smaller black-headed members of the family, and battle singly or in couples against the wind, keeping above the water-line, and with keenest eyes scrutinise the sand and sea for anything which may be edible, whether dead or alive.

A group of handsome birds may often be seen far off, and usually close by the mouth of the stream as it enters the sea. Through the binocular—which is invaluable to the sea-shore shooter—their forms and colours fill the eye, especially when a wintry sun-gleam falls from a rift in the clouds athwart the embouchure of the stream. These are ducks, as their shape shows, but not the ordinary mallard, or wild-duck, which indeed forms the most valuable, as it is the most infrequent prize of the shooter on the sands. These smaller ducks or pochards are marked by their handsome orange-chestnut head and neck, and the dusky black of the breast and back contrasting with the white black-pencilled wing-coverts. By careful stalking against the wind, a shot is sometimes obtained, and the pochard has the peculiarity of not requiring so hard a blow to bring it down as do other wildfowl; to which may be added the fact that, unlike some of the other species of ducks which haunt the shore or the sea within a certain distance of low-water line, the bird is fairly good eating.

Besides the pochards, small knots of sheldrakes are sometimes seen where, in the loneliest spots, the mollusca are very plentiful beneath the sands. The most careless eye will distinguish these large birds by their flight, which is not so rapid as that of other wild-ducks, and by their plumage of orange and white, and crimson bills. These ducks may often be seen performing their curious dance, resembling that which, in the last century, Bisset taught some unhappy turkeys by the unpleasant method of heating iron plates under their feet. The ducks balance themselves from side to side, jumping up and down where the sand is moistened, the vibration produced by their webbed feet bringing any creatures that are underneath to the surface, when the broad crimson bills are brought into requisition.

The true wild-duck, the mallard—splendid in orange, brown, and purple—is mostly shot by patient and particularly cold waiting at the upper end of the bay, where the stream first enters the sands. Often indeed is a swift straight line of these much coveted birds seen flying fast and high landward; but alas! in most cases, seeing them is the extent of our experience.

Sometimes, as the twilight thickens over the lonely sands, the constant whistling of a group of widgeon rings through the air, as the beautiful birds, of the cream-coloured head and chestnut breast, speed to their feeding-places; and then it is, if fortune favours, that the shooter, hidden behind a rock, obtains the chance of a long shot.

Nor must the crowd of smaller shore-birds, whose piping and restless wings enliven the winter shore, be forgotten—the flocks of red-billed oyster-catchers always wheeling and turning in compact order above the shingle; and various other less showy creatures flying, running, whistling, and feeding on the wide, wet sands.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XXVI.—MR HAMBER HAS COMPANY.

It was quite an aristocratic house, though very small, that occupied by Mrs Brinjohn in the little street parallel with the Buckingham Palace Road. No noisy traffic passed through it, because one end was closed, save for foot passengers, and everything implied more than respectability. In fact, boys in buttons, and two valets, one in livery and one out, connected with different houses, together with an abundant crop of parlour-maids, suggested fashion associated with limited incomes. Men came there with Bath chairs to take elderly ladies for airings along the Mall, Bird Cage Walk, and that most suitably named place, Constitution Hill, where birds could be heard twittering over in Her Majesty's Private Garden. A brougham—job, from the livery stables at the back certainly, but still a brougham—used to be seen standing on fine afternoons at No. 19. At No. 12 lived a major-general, long retired from the Indian army, and loud oaths were heard to issue from the open windows at times; but it was always a matter of doubt in Minton Place whether they were uttered by the general or by the parrot he kept in a great brass cage. At 16 there was a queen's page; a retired M.D. lodged at 8; the Honourable Miss Dimscott was at 2; and colonels, post captains, two ladies of title, and one M.P., among others, made the highly select shades of Minton Place their home.

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Furnished apartments were the great institution of the quiet street, but cards were never seen bearing the vulgar announcement of 'To Let' in any window, for the occupants stayed on year after year, forming for the most part a little society of their own; and when a drawing-room floor was likely to be vacant, there were plenty of friends ready to make applications, and pay a heavy rent.

Of course it was the close proximity to Buckingham Palace and Eatonia which stamped Minton Place with so high class a hall-mark, without taking into consideration the pleasant shadowing afforded by the great gloomy back of the Duchy of Lancaster buildings, which effectually screened the east winds blowing over St James's Park.

Mrs Brinjohn's was No. 3, and old Hamber, who had occupied the little drawing-room floor there for many years, always congratulating himself upon his great luck in getting the tiny suite of two rooms and a dressing ditto, the ditto once a cupboard till a glazed window was added, just affording convenience for a small round sponge bath, and room for a careful man to shave without cutting himself—careful, for any reckless razor-handler would certainly have struck his elbow against the wainscot with dire results.

Mr Brinjohn was something at the royal mews nearly opposite, beyond the facing row of houses, and he had been seen in scarlet livery upon very rare occasions; but his existence was almost a mystery, for he was seldom seen at home, the greater part of his time being taken up with the toilet and administering to the herbivorous wants of certain particularly sleek cream-coloured and black Flanders-bred ponies, the said quadrupeds being unusually large for their title, probably from the sybarite life they led.

The Brinjohns were well to do in their way, for though Mr Brinjohn, as a royal domestic, did not work very hard, Mrs Brinjohn did, forming herself into a kind of upper general servant, the under being a neat-handed Phyllis, who assisted her in keeping the house as clean as a new pin.

It was a fine Sunday morning: Mr Hamber had just finished his breakfast, and was chirruping to Dicky, who in the most friendly and social manner shook his canary coat, set up the feathers of his throat and crest, hopped from newly scraped perch to perch, chirruped back, and threw in pleasant little snatches of song. For the sun shone into his cage, with its newly sanded tray, the paper which had been pinned round the bars while he had his bath had been removed, he was quite dry again, and he had playfully pecked the white fingers which had inserted a piece of groundsel at the top and wedged a lump of white sugar between the bars in front.

Dicky was cheerful, but his master looked very old and sad, and more than once shook his head at the bird, and felt a kind of envy of the little prisoner, who now burst forth into a loud musical trill, in answer to a goldfinch across the road.

The breakfast things were not yet cleared away, for Mrs Brinjohn, though partially dressed for church, was busy in the underground front kitchen with her sleeves pinned back, and her skirt reversed, while she busily made the tart which was to follow the chicken Mary Ann was stuffing with fresh butter and bread crumbs for Mr Hamber's dinner.

'Put a bit o' writing paper round it; and, whatever you do, baste it well, and mind it don't burn, Mary Ann.'

'Don't you be afeared about that, mum,' was the reply.

'And don't forget the bread sauce,' said Mrs Brinjohn, who had slightly floured her itching nose.

'Oh no, mum.'

'Put in plenty of peppercorns,' continued Mrs Brinjohn, who had fitted on the top crust of the tart, and was now artistically checkering the edge with a floured fork.

'Trust me for that, mum.'

'And don't leave the onion in too long, and —— Bless and save us! what's that?'

For there was the trampling of horses, the rattle of wheels, and the place was darkened by a carriage stopping in front of the house.

''Tain't for here, mum; it's for them new people next door,' said Mary Ann, speaking as she drove a skewer through the chicken's wings.

A thundering knock, which echoed through the house, proved the fallacy of the maiden's words, and Mrs Brinjohn looked aghast.

'I aren't fit to go, mum,' cried Mary Ann; and her mistress rapidly wiped her floury hands before hurrying up-stairs, removing pins and shaking down skirts and sleeves on her way to the door.

'Mr 'Amber at home?' asked a footman in black livery, and directly after Mrs Brinjohn's heart was beating with pride, and her nerves tingling with curiosity, as she saw the door of the handsome barouche opened—a real carriage and pair, stopping at her door, for her first floor, one which would excite the envy of every one in Minton Place.

The next minute she was showing up the graceful lady in black, closely veiled, and she had just reached the little drawing-room door, when a qualm of horror shot through her, for she recollected that the breakfast things had not been cleared away.

But it was too late. She had a glimpse of old Hamber's astonished face, as he stood there, hat in one hand, prayer-book and clean handkerchief in the other, ready for his Sunday morning walk through the Enclosure to the Abbey. Then she had closed the door, and gone down panting.

'My dear young lady!' cried the old man, trembling as he took the hands extended to him, and then placed a chair, 'I—I really did not expect this visit. Is—is anything wrong?'

'Yes,' said Renée, in a low voice full of pain, 'I am in great trouble; I have come to you.'

She sank back wearily in the chair, and in his flurry the old man dropped his prayer-book, picked it up, and put it in his hat, turned it out on to the table, and then impatiently tossed his hat into a corner.

'Trouble,' he cried; 'more trouble. My dear, is there to be no end to it all?'

'I don't know, Mr Hamber; but I seem to have no one to fly to but you. I want you to tell me everything.'

The old man shook his head as he looked at her wistfully.

'I have a right,' she cried firmly; and now she hurriedly removed her veil, and he saw the wild look in her eyes, the pallor in her cheeks, tokens of a sleepless night, a heart wrung by anxiety.

'Yes, my dear young lady, I suppose you have—no one a better right. I always have made it a rule to leave all the business of the office in Great George Street, but one never knows.'

'Tell me then. My cousin seems to have assumed the entire management of my dear father's affairs, and treats me as what I am —a woman.'

'Yes, my dear young lady; it was such a pity that, clever business man as he was, my poor dear employer had put off the proper settlement of his estate.'

'Too late to lament that, Mr Hamber, but I must, as his child, have a right to know everything. Tell me now all you know. No; I will ask you questions. What is this great trouble about a government contract?'

The old man hesitated.

'There has been some serious application made.'

'Yes, my dear—very serious.'

'There has been some breach of faith?'

'Yes.'

'Some papers or plans have been stolen and sold?'

'It is very dreadful for me to have to tell you, my dear child—you'll excuse me calling you my dear child, ma'am; but I held you in my arms; your father placed you there, when you were a tiny little angel of a thing, only a week old.'

'Yes—yes—yes—dear Mr Hamber; but pray tell me all.'

'I will, my dear young mistress; those important documents, the government say, have been stolen and sold.'

'Yes; my cousin showed me the letter, but tell me—I must know—by whom?'

The old man was silent.

'You do not speak, Mr Hamber,' she cried, wildly; 'cannot you see how you are torturing me?'

'Yes, yes, my dear; but it is so hard,' said the old man trembling. 'Mr Brant had the letter, and—and he said it only rested with one or two—he accused me.'

'You!' cried Renée scornfully. 'My dear dead father's trusted old clerk!'

'Ah!' cried old Hamber with the tears gathering in his eyes; and he caught at Rénée's hand, and kissed it again and again. 'You wouldn't believe that of me?'

'Believe that of you!' cried Rénée. 'Impossible. But go on—tell me. Did he accuse any one else?'

The old man was silent again.

'Mr Hamber?'

'Yes, yes, my dear; but must I speak?'

'You must tell me everything,' she cried, clinging to his hand.

'I'll try,' he said simply; 'but don't—don't be angry with me if I hurt your feelings—if I give you great pain.'

'No. Tell me.'

'Your cousin—Mr Brant then turned upon Mr Wynyan and accused him.'

Renée's pale cheeks flushed now.

'How could he?' she said hoarsely. 'Why?'

'He said that Mr Wynyan was the only one who had had access to the papers.'

'But he had a right. He was partly the inventor.'

'Yes, my dear, he was.'

'Then it must have been a false charge. What did Mr Wynyan say?'

'He was very, very angry, but he mastered himself, and at last they parted.'

'But you—you, Mr Hamber—you don't think —you cannot believe this?'

'Things looked very black against Mr Wynyan, my dear young lady. As your cousin pointed out, he had done what he ought not to have done.'

'What? Tell me what.'

'He had taken those plans away, and kept them for days.'

'Yes; but he must have had a reason. Did he really take them?'

'Yes, my dear.'

'Did he own to having taken them?'

'Yes, my dear.'

'But they were partly his.'

'I suppose he thought so, my dear child.'

'Then—then,' cried Renée piteously, 'you believe that Mr Wynyan has been guilty of this dreadful breach of trust—of a crime that may ruin the business of which my poor father was so proud. You believe then, that Mr Wynyan could be this dishonest wretch?'

'I'd sooner cut off that right hand, my dear,' said the old man proudly. 'Mr Wynyan could not have done anything so base.'

'No, no,' she cried excitedly; and then as if ashamed of her utterance, and shrinking, reddening beneath the old man's gaze, she added hurriedly, 'No, it is impossible. My father believed fully in Mr Wynyan, and he could not have been so base.'

There was silence for a few minutes, and then Renée began hurriedly to replace her veil, talking the while in an excited way.

'I wanted to know everything from some one I could fully trust; and—and—you were just going to church, Mr Hamber?'

The old man bent his head.

'Yes; I remember poor papa told me you always went to the Abbey.'

'Always, my dear.'

'Let me take you this morning. The carriage is at the door.'

'You, my dear child? I—I'——

'Yes; let me take you, Mr Hamber. No,' she half whispered, as she laid her hand upon his arm and looked in his face. 'Please take me. Let me go with you. I feel that I want to kneel down by the side of some one who was my dead father's trusted friend, to pray for the light—that these troubles of my poor life may be cleared away—that the truth may prevail, and that I may choose the path that is right.'

'But, my dear young lady,' faltered the old clerk.

'Mr Hamber, you held me in your arms as a child. I am so lonely; I have hardly one to cling to. Come with me; I want to see the light.'

A NEGLECTED AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY.

It is a far cry indeed from the rocky coast of Scotland, from the wild Atlantic and the treacherous North Sea, to the quiet, deep, and exceeding prolific waters of the South Pacific; and any one coming fresh from our overmanned, unremunerative fisheries in the old country stands appalled at the spectacle of these teeming waters, the living harvest of which is but rarely disturbed by hook or net. And when on rare occasions these inventions do invade the rocky caverns, or sweep the deep sunk sand-flats, local markets are unaffected, for it is the hook of the amateur or the dredge of the naturalist.

Twelve thousand miles is no easy distance, nor can we even nowadays afford to disregard the cost of travel; yet it does seem astounding that the continually increasing march of emigration should not as yet have found recruits from the ranks of the younger generation of experienced fishermen.

The population of Sydney are by inclination great fish eaters; indeed, climatic conditions render a partial fish diet highly desirable from a hygienic standpoint. Yet, though it is at the very gates of the most prolific of all the oceans, nowhere could one find a maritime city more miserably supplied with fish. To such a degree do the deep waters in the offing teem with schnapper, jew fish, blue groper, mullet, pike, gurnard, flathead, whiting, trevally, teraglin, and other eatable species, that I have seen the bottom of the boat covered with splendid fish up to thirty pounds in weight, in the course of a couple of hours' hand-lining.

Granted, the sharks, many and voracious, are at certain seasons a serious drawback, the tiger more especially, and blue pointer, which not infrequently charge up to the very gunwale, and levy tribute of the half of each fish hauled; but they are not by any means ubiquitous, nor, as is commonly supposed, do they follow small boats for any distance, so that it is, except when mullet is the bait in use, generally possible to shift one's bearings, and escape this kind of persecution. Mullet they will scent, according to local wiseacres, from a mile off; and without vouching for the truth of this, it must be admitted that soon after half a mullet is lowered on the hook, the water around is alive with sharks, whereas not a fin was to be seen the minute before.

But how, it will be asked, is it possible that, with all this vast and varied quantity of fish just without Port Jackson, the prices in the Sydney shops should be exorbitant? Railways, much abused at home, play no part in the question here, since the largest and smallest boats alike can bring the fish right up to the Circular Quay. How, then, can the demand of barely half a million people all told possibly be in excess of this apparently inexhaustible supply?

The answer is simple. Sydney has no fishermen. A few Italians there are, and some still more dilapidated Anglo-Saxons, who having on long and shaky credit acquired temporary ownership of an unseaworthy dinghy and a second-hand seine, scrape again and again the long since overtaxed waters of this beautiful harbour, which they denude of everything large and small, mature and immature, receiving the protests of local protection associations with expressions the reverse of urbane. And these are the folks upon whom the city depends for its fish-supply.

Of late years, it is true, the rapidly extended railway system has brought within reach of the metropolitan market the prolific waters of Lake Macquarie, about a hundred miles northward up the coast, and a few other salt-water lagoons of similar nature. But deep-sea fishermen are in the true sense of the word unknown here. When one has tossed about off the Scillies with the Mevagissey men, or westward of the Dogger with the Northerners, one looks in vain for the men of fine physique and indomitable courage, great at defeating obstacles, good fathers, God-fearing citizens. Too many of those who take their place here are mere lazy, foul-mouthed ruffians, who, though the terror of the unprotected in the streets, are fearful of venturing a mile outside the Heads.

And then the question suggests itself: Why cannot some of our countrymen leave the overfished firths of their native land and better themselves out here in the vast and prolific virgin seas at their disposal?

In his evidence before the Select Committee which sat at Westminster in 1893, that able administrator of Scotch fishery research, Professor M'Intosh, included the seas of Australia among those which over-trawling had depleted. This must have been a mistake, as the open seas here, so far from any possibility of depletion, have never yet been effectually fished at all.

Though loth to father any ill-considered scheme of emigration for fishermen, it certainly seems evident that an enterprising company might develop a highly remunerative plan of action out of the promise of these waters. Numbers of the younger generation of skilled fishermen there must be, to whom a lengthy visit, if not indeed a permanent stay, in the Antipodes would not be displeasing, and a competent builder of sea-going craft would speedily handle to good purpose the cheap and unrivalled local timbers. At all events, one would strongly counsel those Agents-general who so freely circulate hints for the benefit of intending emigrants, to add a minute to the effect that the one neglected, undermanned colonial industry is the fishing industry.

If figures are wanting to show the present crude regulation of prices in this trade, one must visit the fishmarket at Woolloomooloo, a busy and thickly populated quarter on the south shore of the harbour. The market, which was built by the Council at a cost of near ten thousand pounds—and there are additional ice-houses being erected at a cost of a further six thousand—covers an area of not far short of twenty thousand square feet.

It is a strange sight indeed at 5 A.M. these dark wintry mornings—a motley crowd of Jews and Italians hustling the agents and auctioneers, and often overstepping the boundary lines on the floor, within which lie the parcels of fish of every size and hue, many still quivering in the throes of a slow death.

The auctioneers act for the Council, to whom the five per cent. commission on all sales means a revenue of two or three thousand pounds, another thousand being derived from the charge of a weekly five shillings for the use of salt-water tanks wherein are all the paraphernalia for cleaning the fish, and also from the halfpenny per pound charged for depositing perishable wares in the ice-room.

We shall see in a moment what the fisherman finally gets for his all-night job. There is no retail market, so that the fish are disposed of in parcels of a dozen: schnapper of a large size at twelve shillings, jew fish from ten to eighty shillings, mullet three shillings, one hundred pounds of gar fish and long toms for a sovereign, and so on *pro rata*.

Now, before the fisherman gets his money, there is a little deduction of ten per cent., divided equally between his own agent and the municipal auctioneer; so that, for example, the fisherman gets eighteen shillings for one hundred pounds of small gar fish. These run about six to the pound, and are sold in the town at eighteenpence a dozen. This gives the fishmonger a profit of nearly four hundred per cent. on his outlay. In other instances, profits are if anything greater. Nothing is to be had, save black fish and a few other unpalatable kinds, at less than tenpence per pound. Nor are the mongers in Hunter and George streets at all times over-particular in the display of wares upon their marble slabs. Towell and Sweeting would shudder at the dried mummies half hidden beneath clouds of pestilent flies.

As there is plenty of good thirty-fathom water, trawls might be effectively worked along the less rocky stretches of the coast; but it is the handliner who would head the list with big fish for each morning's market. And what a future there would be, too, for a good retail fishmarket in a less objectionable quarter of the city than Woolloomooloo, where the housewife could be sure of cheap, fresh fish for each breakfast or dinner! But the mere contemplation of what Sydney's fish trade is, and what it should be, opens up endless vistas of wonderful possibilities. Truly this oldest and last exploited continent is a land of promise. Will that promise ever be fulfilled?

AN ADVENTUROUS WEEK.

CHAPTER II.

THE Canea inn was not a place I should have cared to spend a week in. I found it cumbered with Turkish officers, including two of our ruffianly fellow-passengers on the *Osman*. There were also other officials: they must have been that, from their ridiculous air of importance. And the courtyard (with a well in the middle, the water of which I would not have drunk for a hundred pounds) was thick with tatterdemalions of the mendicant breed, as well as long-tailed horses and baggage mules.

I wished I had learned a little conversational Greek. The good kavass was satisfied to leave me at the inn door. Thence I prowled from room to room, seeking Naylor, and replying to the interrogations of the landlord (a broad-shouldered rogue of a Greek) with nods of regret at my inability either to understand his observations or offer him any that he could understand. A certain Turk, Cusseim Bimbashi, as I learned later, seemed much amused in a sardonic way at my predicament. He smoked and smiled; and I conceived a hatred of him, unreasonable of course, yet justified by intuition.

At last I hit upon the roving correspondent. I heard the murmur of song of an unmistakably British kind from behind a door in the bedroom corridor. At this door I knocked, and Naylor's voice replied.

He was writing, singing, and smoking at the same time, but dropped his pen when he saw me.

'The very man I wanted,' he exclaimed. 'I wish you'd do something for me.'

'What?'

'Well, I reckon you don't propose to waste your valuable hours here. Will you take a letter for me when you return to the Bosporus?'

'I'm not so sure that I go back with the *Osman*,' I replied.

'Oh, then I'm just as glad to know that I shall have a friend and compatriot in the land.—Look here, Graham: is that door shut?'

I made sure that it was.

'Not that it matters much,' Naylor continued, laughing. 'There's no one here born and bred in London, and I'm Cockney to the bone. But I've got my business settled, and it's likely to start with a fair amount of hazard.'

'Drive on,' I said, with thoughts of Helena Nicolopoulos still engrossing me.

'Listen. I've squared the authorities in Canea to such a tune that I'm off with a detachment of these Turkish beauties this very night to Lakko, or some such place. They think my sympathies and those of my paper (I wish I knew which it was; but never mind that)—they think we're philo-Turk. That means that I am to be discreetly blind to all inhumanity, and that I'm to call the patriots every hard name I can forge. So far well. But this time to-morrow I shall be on quite the other tack; and of these beauties down-stairs, if one or two survive, it'll be a wonder. I believe a Sphakiot can hit a bee on the wing by day, or a flying bat by night. Well, they'll have some easier sport than that ere cockcrow again.'

'Take care what you're about, Naylor,' I said, with only a vague idea, however, of his little plan or plot.

'I shall do that, of course. Meanwhile, give me five minutes more to finish this letter. As you don't know your own movements, I must get this off in the common postbag. Help yourself to tobacco: best Turkish at half-a-crown a pound, and warranted pure.'

I watched him scribbling while I smoked. His devil-may-care tone interested me. It did more: it evoked a sort of responsive chord in my own nature. Commonplace commercial interests seemed a poor affair to this gamble between life and death in which he was engaged. Why should not I, too, see a little of the sterner and most exciting side of life?

'Look here, Naylor,' I said, when he had finished and sighed contentedly. 'I'd like much to go with you.'

'To the seat of war?' he inquired, surprised.

'Yes, anywhere up yonder.' I nodded, as I supposed, towards Sphakia.

'Really, old man?'

'Candidly.'

'It's a cool toss up whether you'd come out of it alive. You see that?'

'I understand that.'

'My dear Graham,' said Naylor, rubbing his hands, 'you delight me exceedingly; but I mustn't keep you the least bit in the dark about it. The fact is, you remember a fellow named Thyatis that I mentioned?'

'Yes. I have seen him too.'

'How did you know him?'

'The consul's kavass recognised him, and'——

'Hang the fool's sharp eyes and Giorgio's sublime audacity! However, I daresay his usual luck will pull him through all right. They think him a sort of "Jupiter Omnipotens" in Athens; and, upon my soul, there's something in it. But I'll tell you all, and then you'll see what a fellow he is. As soon as I got off the boat, I met Thyatis at a little den I'd been told of. A fellow took me there: Thyatis had sent him. Well, there were six or eight more, every manjack of whom would be shot or flayed alive without parley if he were in the hands of the Sultan's lot. They arranged things between them. I gather that up by Lakko the Moslems are getting the worst of it, and have gone into blockhouses or something, pending relief or further orders. The relief party starts to-night, accompanied by me. It isn't a very strong batch, but the officers are of the neck-or-nothing kind, who'd scorn to give quarter to any one. That's good enough booty for Thyatis and his comrades up there. And so, in a convenient little defile we wot of, there will be preparations for an ambuscade that shall crush the life out of every soul—including mine, if I don't look precious sharp about it. After that, if I get through, there'll be handshaking, wine-drinking, and feasting with the patriots, and I'll have a surfeit of local colour and tragic incidents. The storming of the blockhouses is to follow hard on. In a week we may see the Pasha superseded, if not expelled, by the patriots, and Sphakia ruling in Canea. One never knows how things will turn out. But, anyway, that's the programme, and I've let you into a secret I ought to have kept to myself.'

Naylor's words had set the blood galloping in me. What was oil-buying to this sort of experience?

'If you can manage it,' I said, 'I'll face all risks to be with you.'

'Good! What papers have you got?'

I showed him my passport, which was in Greek and Turkish. It was a general safe-conduct in the island, and contained an order for all the authorities to do their utmost for my protection. Naylor read it with chuckles.

'It'll do, my boy,' he said; 'it'll do. I'm afraid we shall both be playing *la perfide Albion* a bit; but there's this about it: Thyatis and his men will do their work whether we're with them or not.'

'Then it's an agreed thing, Naylor?' I inquired.

'Here's my hand on it, old chap. We'll have some sport together, as sure as eggs. My instructions to you are these: keep out of the way of our worshipful consul, lest he ask tiresome questions entailing equivocal answers or worse; and allow me to spring your plan upon Cusseim Bimbashi when the expedition is on the point of starting—not a moment before. And now, how's your appetite, and do you carry a reliable revolver?'

As it happened, I had both a good appetite and a good little five-chambered Webley, with a hundred cartridges.

Naylor then ordered dinner. The landlord bowed very low to him, believing him to be a representative of Great Britain, sent direct by Her Majesty the Queen to report on the war; a delusion which the correspondent did not mind fostering until it was time to pay his bill.

Afterwards, I, too, had to write letters. These did not come so easy to me as Naylor's to him. I had to be discreet with my partner; and I had to give my mother a hint, and nothing more than a hint, about the difficulty of postal communication between England and an island at present somewhat (only somewhat) disturbed. But my pen ran away with me, and when I re-read the latter epistle, I found I had written more than half a page devoted entirely to Helena Nicolopoulos. After due deliberation, I decided that I would not erase these ten or eleven lines. Perhaps Providence was at the root of the matter. Other Englishmen had married Greek girls and not regretted it. But I knew just how my good mother would shake her head when she read that page, the greater part of which had come out apparently red hot from my heart.

We dined in rather a distinguished manner. The two men who waited on us were armed with valuable little daggers, and tinkled with silver chains. And the landlord himself helped with the dishes and the wines. The latter were like the Cretan character—distinctly strong and fiery.

Dinner over, we agreed to separate. Naylor was no doubt right in his conjecture that we ought not to be seen too much together. Certainly he was, if our consul had had intelligence (which was likely) of my friend's meeting with the bold Thyatis.

'Take a stroll for your health's sake, old man,' said Naylor. 'Only, mind your bearings, control your temper, and be sure you are here again before sunset. They shut the gates then, and are pretty particular afterwards whom they let in or out.'

I suppose it wasn't very wonderful that I should find my way again to Khalepa. It was the only place I knew. That was one thing. And the villas with their gardens, and the red and gray background of the crags of Akrotiri, made up a bright picture, other allurements apart.

But of course the girl in white, with the violet eyes and the mandoline, was my main attraction thither.

I felt like an ill-conditioned schoolboy when I found myself in that avenue again. This time there was no music—nothing but the chirp of grasshoppers. The sun was scorching outside, and succeeded even in burning its way through the arcade of flowers and verdure.

Nicolopoulos was in, and apparently glad to see me. He gave me coffee and cigarettes, and every verbal encouragement to get out of Crete. He was as unlike a mercantile Greek as man could be. But no word of his daughter did he volunteer; nor could I hear any sound significative of her presence in the house.

Once I all but let out the secret of my change of plans, hoping to stimulate him into ardour and perhaps a show of domestic confidence. But I wisely held my tongue. There is no such dangerous confederate in Eastern politics as a Greek; and after all, I had no positive assurance that Nicolopoulos's sympathies were with the Christians rather than the Moslems of the island, Christian though of course he himself was.

His coffee was excellent. That was the sum-total of the result of my little afternoon call.

When an hour had passed, I had no alternative but to rise. The merchant did not press me to stay.

But as Nicolopoulos opened his door to let me out, I saw a flutter of white drift across the path and disappear amid the trees in the direction of the summer-house. My host's eyes shot also in that direction.

'What was it?' I asked, though I knew all too well.

'It was nothing, Mr Graham, nothing that has to do with us,' he said, lying deliberately.

From his tone I knew it was futile to try and mix myself up with his family affairs. This realisation depressed me greatly.

The next moment, however, I caught sight of a hammock swung on the other side of the avenue, between two well-grown orange-trees, and a newspaper half in the hammock.

'Pardon me—what magnificent trees!' I exclaimed, as I stepped towards the paper.

'The climate is good for the oranges,' said Nicolopoulos; 'but they are best in the plain.'

I had espied some frayed roses in the netting. They had been picked, toyed with, and abandoned; instinct readily told me by whom. It was easy to take one of them, smell it idly, turn and rejoin Nicolopoulos, and then put it in my pocket.

My visit had not been in vain, after all. Those crumpled, perfumed petals were an incredible joy to me as I tramped back to Canea through the dust.

So much so indeed, that they, and little besides, made me stop by the shore, clamber into a rocky recess, and stay thus perched for a good hour or more. I fondled those rose-leaves absurdly—why should not I confess it? And I looked at them considerably more than at the lazy Mediterranean waves, which now only throbbed upon the Cretan sands and rocks. The eternal bugling on the Canea walls still continued, softened a little by distance. But the echo of those sweeter sounds of the morning was more powerful in me than all else.

It was a mere day-dream, yet it made its mark on me. I rambled back into Canea, thinking precious little about the impending adventure of the evening. It was getting dusk when I re-entered the inn, the smells of which were unmistakably of the kind that flourish about the time of sundown.

But I had soon to pull myself together, at Naylor's instigation.

We were to start at ten o'clock. He had contrived to hire a mule for me, and also to make friends with Cusseim Bimbashi as a preliminary to my introduction into the troop. And he had obtained his and my bill from the inn landlord, and was digesting it badly.

The quarrel that ensued upon this last was sharp and not exactly short. Naylor had the impudence to propose to knock off the final nought in the number of piastres. He managed eventually to reduce the amount by one-half. The Bimbashi, who was present during this little contest, buckling on his pistols and issuing his orders to a nimble servant, seemed amused as ever. He was less amused when Naylor showed him my firman, and made him know that he would have two Englishmen instead of one to take care of. He examined the authority very narrowly, using spectacles for the purpose, and at one time seemed inclined to send to the governor for his orders. But Naylor's tact came to the rescue.

And so, shortly after ten, with all the clatter so dearly loved by Orientals, we moved noisily up the pent streets. I had a feeling that every latticed window on either hand had a face to it, peering at us, and probably cursing us. But the stars were radiant overhead, and the white shafts of the minarets, as we passed them by, were good to see in the pallid light.

'Whatever you do, keep alongside me,' Naylor had said at starting. He had his pipe in his mouth, and seemed quite happy.

For some hours we were free to taste the undiluted romance of our journey. It would be broad daylight ere the troop could hope to be in the highlands, which seemed a silly freak of mismanagement, if it was the design of this hundred or two soldiers to steal unperceived to the relief of their comrades. The better for us, methought. If the Sphakiots were such smart marksmen, they could not then fail to distinguish us in our civilian dress from the red-coated Moslems. Yet, on the other hand, only Naylor was expected, which might make it awkward for me.

We passed the leper village, and the hovel of Helena's mother last of all. It made my blood heat in my veins to think afresh of this horror. I had to expel by sheer force of will the reflections that followed.

The farther we proceeded, the higher Naylor's spirits rose. He hummed opera airs, and between whiles whispered to me all kinds of information.

Of a certain mass of ruins that we left on our right hand (there was a nightingale in one of the undestroyed trees about it) he told me some horrible tales, on what authority I know not. Two or three dozen Christians had been massacred here in cold blood, and the monks—for it had been a monastery—had had their beards torn out by the roots. He was even more interested in my mule than I was. The animal was not in good condition and needed constant spurring. He aided my own uncivil attentions by kicking the poor brute now and then with one of his exceptionally long legs.

I had believed the plain to be thickly peopled with villages; but we skirted only one. The fact was that we kept to by-roads, or rather paths—and shocking enough they were—so that our passage should be as secret as possible. Our route was thus somewhat sinuous, and there were times when, if my mule had stumbled badly, I should have had a good chance of being impaled on the stout blades of the aloes which served as an extremely close hedge.

Twice we forded a wide stream in which the water ran fast from the mountains, with gloomy ravines higher up. The troopers did not hold their tongues here. Neither they nor the officers' horses (nor our mules either) liked the snow-cold water.

Then our course led us up and up by the roughest of routes. We zigzagged one after the other, slipping and stumbling, and the stars above seemed to twinkle derisively at us. You see, this nocturnal trip and its possible eventualities had got hold of my imagination. Helena Nicolopoulos also had an effect on my fancy, which hitherto no one had reckoned a vivid or fantastic one.

With the slow breaking of the dawn, I began to experience some of the pains as well as the pleasures of excitement. The gray light crept over us and our mountainous surroundings with most disagreeable suggestiveness. I marked the growing eagerness in Naylor's face, and how he scanned the pinnacles and ridges which gradually declared themselves above us. Nor was he alone in this. Cusseim Bimbashi and another of the officers showed more vigilance than I expected of them. They sent skirmishers forward and had their glasses to their eyes every other minute.

From this time Naylor and I stole little by little to the rear of the troop.

'That's our cue,' he said. 'It might go hard with us else.'

Cusseim at one moment seemed to notice what we were doing. But the eternal smile on his face now said somewhat plainly: 'These fine Englishmen are afraid. So be it. Let them do as they will.'

His policy of non-interference suited us admirably.

Under milder circumstances, I could have enjoyed intensely the sunrise as we saw it from the heights we had reached. A huge dome of rock, speckled with snow high in front, flushed crimson, and the crimson changed to gold, which slowly descended one of its sides. Looking backwards, there was also a glimpse of the pale golden light flooding the great plain we had crossed. White villages and green orchards and gardens were briefly transfigured.

Very briefly, though; for almost immediately afterwards we entered a dark shadowy cañon down which a cold breath blew in our faces.

'Graham,' Naylor whispered. We were more quiet in the rear. The officer on the gray horse at the tail of the troops was five or six good paces in front of us.

'Yes.'

'Pull yourself together. This is about the place.'

My senses were instantly on the alert. I looked up at the red and black sides of the ravine, and at the brawling torrent on our left hand. It was certainly a fearful place to be entrapped in.

Then I looked back and saw two armed men dart under cover. The wind caught their wide blue breeches and bellied them for a moment.

'That's all right,' said Naylor, when I told him what I had seen. 'The surer they make it, the better for us.'

At the same time, it was an uncomfortable sensation to feel that at any moment we might be potted from behind, and that not a single red-coat stood between us and these redoubtable highlanders in the rear.

But suddenly this sense of uneasiness was ousted by something keener. There was a crashing sound, an outburst of cries from officers and men, several score of brown faces (for the moment almost white with terror) were turned skywards, and then a rock, weighing, I know not how many tons, crunched into the middle of the hapless Moslems. The cracking of many muskets followed. We were attacked with a vengeance.

'Off with you!' shouted Naylor, as he jumped from his mule. 'We must get shelter.'

It was not easy to find, but we obtained some in the river-bed, under the lee of a huge boulder. Hence Naylor held forth a common cotton pocket-handkerchief on the end of his riding-whip. There was a Union Jack on the handkerchief, and we both trusted with all our hearts that every Sphakiot above and in the ravine had been taught by Thyatis what this token signified.

The riot and shouting above and in front were strangely exhilarating to me. This was war of a kind, and I seemed to like it. But I know not how it would have been if we had been compelled, like the doomed soldiers, to do battle against such terrible odds.

We could not *see* much that was going on. Prudence bade us keep our heads concealed.

Now and again, though, we watched the red-coats reel by ones and twos into the river higher up, and then lie or struggle. One rather small soldier was carried down past us in the middle of the waters, and a bullet hissed into the stream close to him, and annoyingly close to us also.

It was mere butchery, as it happened. The shouts above increased, and those before and behind the Sultan's men drew nearer and nearer as the number of shots lessened.

Naylor kept up a running comment on the different phases of the engagement. Once he was about to stand up, when a sharp exchange of fire took place in the neighbourhood.

'A narrow thing that!' he whispered as we huddled together again.

But it was really the final volley. Nothing remained to be done except cut the throats of the wounded; and this ghastly work was fast being carried through, when Thyatis himself descended gaily to us and summoned Naylor forth.

'A friend, Giorgio!' cried the latter in French, as we stood erect, and began to clamber up to the track.

A cordial handshake from the magnificent patriot, whose eyes glowed with victory, very soon dispelled all doubts about my reception. 'Magnificent' is none too big a word to use about Giorgio Thyatis as he then appeared. From his red-tasselled Cretan fez to his pale-blue jacket, studded with silver buttons (and his waistcoat the same), his dark-blue baggy breeches, and his yellow leather top-boots, he looked a splendid fellow. And the smoking gun on his shoulder showed that he was not a mere verbal conspirator, like so many others who cried 'Fight, fight! brave children!' and themselves stayed in Athens to watch the issue of the duel.

The throat-cutting was too much for me. Perhaps it *was* necessary, and I daresay if the Moslems had won the day, they would have done worse things with the wounded patriots. But it was a sickening business. I set my back to it and smoked a cigarette, while Naylor, Thyatis, and two others carried on a conversation.

By-and-by Naylor turned to me.

'You 're sure you haven't changed your mind, Graham?' he asked.

'Not I,' I replied. 'But this butchery beats me.'

'Yes, it's too bad; but they 've no alternative. Look here: I 'm going to run off a few lines. One of them's got to work his way into Canea, to let the committee know about it. He 'll take the letter.'

A long-legged highlander, with moustaches even more remarkable than the consul's kavass's, here approached with a Moslem drum. He smiled all across his face, and his right hand was bloody.

Having placed the drum on the ground before Naylor, he saluted, and was about to retire, when my friend stopped him and asked:

'What place is this?'

'Zurra, Kyrie.'

'Thank you,' said Naylor. 'Then we will stretch a point and call it the battle of Zurra. "Massacre" would fit the case better, but I 'm philo-Cretan now. Sixty-five patriots wipe out a detachment of one hundred and eighty Moslems—not a soul survives, and all with a loss of only two killed and four wounded.'

'Are those the facts, Naylor?' I asked.

'Yes, and quite good enough to make up something startling on for my dear British public. And now don't speak a word for the next half-hour, my dear fellow.'

I sat smoking, and watched Naylor's pen dashing over the paper, watched the piling of the dead Turks in heaps as far from the river as possible (not far, that is), saw the patriots fish out the bodies from the water, refresh themselves from the little wooden barrels they carried at the waist, as well as cartridges and knives galore, and roll cigarettes one after the other. A procession of ten or twelve men rapidly disappeared in the defile, with the wounded in slings. And Giorgio Thyatis the superb seemed everywhere at once.

Here too, in spite of the incongruity of the thing, I thought of Nicolopoulos's daughter. But she seemed more distant from me than seven or eight hours ago, and that was painful to realise.

A BUNDLE OF PARADOXES.

Owing, perhaps, to its exceptional character, anything of the nature of a paradox seems to have a certain attraction for the human mind. Anything contrary to preconceived opinions has, for many, an irresistible fascination. So much is this the case that, when genuine paradoxes happen to be scarce, or altogether lacking, persons are generally to be found of sufficient ingenuity to invent them. In very early times, Eastern thinkers beguiled the monotony of numbers—perhaps, also, of their lives—by grouping figures in the form of 'magic squares,' the peculiar property of which was that, when added up horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, the sum-total was always the same. Something of a paradox lay in this device, seeing that one might naturally expect the totals to be different. Later on, mathematical science stepped in, and laid down hard and fast rules for the construction, not only of magic squares pure and simple, but of squares within squares, pentagons, hexagons, and other geometrical figures, all possessed of the same curious properties. Then, of course, the paradox was a paradox no longer, for, as often happens, the enigma of one age is but the truism of the next. Such mathematical problems even as the quadrature of the circle, the duplication of the cube, and such like, had, in themselves, and in their day, something paradoxical about them until such time as their insolubility was demonstrated. The problem, apparently simple in its statement, and easy of solution, it was found impossible to solve.

But the lover of puzzle and paradox need not despair on this account. In spite of the

advance of modern science, there will always remain, for his delectation, an abundant store of marvels. Fact being stranger than fiction, there will always be, as there always has been, a 'queer side of things'—a region quite as fertile in surprises as that explored by Alice in Wonderland. The difficulty is not so much to know how to select, as to know where to begin, in the way of illustration.

Curiously enough, not a few scientific paradoxes are to be found in the economy of human vision. There is that old puzzle-paradox, for example—one which even the intellect of a Kepler did not despise—to wit, how it is that we see objects erect, notwithstanding the well-known fact that the pictures on the retina of the eye are inverted. Kepler, in his Supplement to Vitellio, was fain to conclude that the inverted image, somehow or other, but chiefly with the aid of the other senses, such as that of touch—was 'rectified' by the judgment of the observer! Later physiologists have exercised their ingenuity over the self-same problem. Quite lately, in a scientific journal of no mean repute, the position was gravely maintained that the observer, having really no other criterion of *up* or *down* than the evidence of his own (inverted) vision, upside down was really the same thing as down-side up, or, in other words, erect! Another authority, in the same medium, had a still more ingenious solution of the difficulty. Noticing that the image of a lighted candle reflected *on the retina of an excised eye* appeared to him inverted, he reasoned that as his own sense of vision perceived the image thus upside down, therefore, upon the retina of the percipient proper it must really be in exactly the reverse position, namely erect. A clever guess, certainly, but one which leaves the problem very much as it was before. The real explanation is apparently the view given by Professor Cleland, of Glasgow University, in his *Animal Physiology*, that the inversion of the retinal image is really no reason why the landscape should appear to us inverted, and that what we perceive is not the retinal image, but a number of sensations excited by it. If we are to explain, he adds, why the landscape is not seen inverted, we must explain why it is not seen inside our heads. But in spite of this lucid *rationale* of erect vision—probably the only true one—a popular paradox the question will doubtless remain, at all events for some time to come.

He was an acute observer who once remarked, 'the more knowledge, the more paradox.' This would seem to be true nowadays, seeing that it is seriously doubted, in scientific circles, if we see with our eyes at all! Professor Hirth, a recognised authority on such subjects, contends that it is only in a very limited sense that we can be said to see with our eyes, and that, in any case, we do not *perceive* with them, this latter function being reserved for certain important organs of the brain, termed by him the 'internal eyes.' The functions of the retina, Professor Hirth maintains, have in the past been gravely overestimated. Should this apparent paradox be substantiated, it will no longer be the conclusive argument it once was considered to be to aver that anything happened because we saw it with 'our eyes!' It may be added that the above paradox is rendered, if possible, still more paradoxical when it is soberly affirmed, in sundry quarters, amongst others by Drs Luys and Rosènthal, that it is not impossible to imagine, theoretically, a state of matters in the human organism in which Ear-gate might, upon occasion, play the part of Eye-gate, and *vice versâ*, the discrimination of sound from colour, &c., depending, not upon the external nerve-terminations, which receive, as we are led to believe, a wholly uniform stimulus, but upon the central apparatus situated within the brain. According to this theory, observes a recent commentator, sound might for us be literally translated into colour; a sonata by Beethoven might seem a picture by Raphael, and we might enjoy a Symphony in Blue and Silver, or a Nocturne in Black and Gold.

After such a startling paradox as the above, we may be pardoned for being somewhat sceptical of anything connected with the pair of organs which we are accustomed to call our eyes. And rightly so, for paradox once more confronts us here. Of having *two* eyes most of us are tolerably assured. It seems, however, that our remote ancestors were credibly possessed of *three*, the third being situated at the back of the head! Unfortunately, all that remains to us of this doubtless highly useful organ is represented by the *pineal gland*, a soft body about the size of a pea, situated at the base of the brain. This rudimentary structure, however, in some lower forms of life—notably in one kind of lizard—has an opening to the light, and is undoubtedly susceptible of visual impressions.

Passing by some curious paradoxes connected with the phenomena of 'colour blindness,' a much more complicated affair than it is generally supposed to be, we find the reign of paradox to extend far beyond the range of human vision, into the realms of space. Not long ago the popular mind was much exercised by the discovery of some curious rectilinear markings on the surface of the planet Mars, which were conjectured by some to be canals—a conclusion perhaps scarcely justified by the facts. Professor Delbœuf, however, availing himself of this hypothesis, framed some elaborate calculations, based on the density and force of gravitation on the Martian planet, as compared with our own, conclusively showing that, if Mars were really inhabited by human beings, they must be entirely different from ourselves in many respects, the conditions of life there, owing to the laws of gravitation alone, being perfectly irreconcilable with our mode of living. Amongst other things, Professor Delbœuf demonstrated that the Martians, *cœteris paribus*, would ascend six of our ordinary steps at a time, and that owing to his power of levitation they would require to have their windows barricaded against the burglar up to the second storey of their houses. His conclusions are too numerous to be here detailed, but it may be added that hammers in Mars, in order to drive a nail with the necessary force, must needs be sixteen times heavier than ours. In fact, that planet, judging by our own ideas, must be the very home of paradox, and in marvels far surpass Lilliput or Brobdingnag.

Even space itself—empty space, as we are accustomed to call it—is no longer a void; it literally teems with paradoxes. A twenty-two ton Armstrong gun hurls a solid shot a distance of twelve miles, the highest point in the arc described by the shot being seventeen thousand feet above the earth's surface. Imagine, now, that the projectile, instead of returning to the earth in a gradually descending curve, were to continue its flight into what is commonly called infinite space, what would be the ultimate result? We might naturally conclude that its prolonged flight would lead it ever farther and farther away from the point of departure. This, however, is by no means so certain as it at first sight appears. The refinements of mathematical investigation have led several inquirers to question whether the shot might not, of course after a lapse of time indefinitely great, return to the place from which it was fired, from precisely the opposite direction, just as a vessel circumnavigating the globe might sail eastward, round the Cape of Good Hope, returning, from the westward, *viâ* Cape Horn. It all depends upon the essential nature of space, whether its 'curvature' be 'zero' or otherwise, and that is a moot point. For the benefit of the curious, it may be added that the matter mainly hinges upon the still undecided question whether the three angles of a triangle are greater than, equal to, or less than two right angles!—a point which most persons believe to have been settled long ago. When paradox thus invades the enclosure hitherto sacred to Euclid and the older mathematicians, it is not very surprising to learn that it is *not* necessarily true, in all cases, that 'the whole is greater than its part,' that venerable axiom obtaining in the case of finite, but not in that of infinite, collections of numbers. After this shock to our early prepossessions, we should not really be startled to hear that there is some underlying fallacy, some secret paradox, even in that time-honoured conclusion that twice two are four!

When paradox may be said to be in the very air, even numbers themselves are ticklish things to deal with. Take the following as an example. Put down any sum of pounds, shillings, and pence, *under eleven pounds*, taking care that the number of pence is less than the number of pounds. Reverse this sum, putting pounds in the place of pence, and *subtract* from original amount. Again reverse this remainder, and *add*. The result in *all* cases will be £12, 18s. 11d., neither more nor less, *whatever the amount with which we start.*

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Example......	8	11	4
Reverse, and *subtract*....................	4	11	8
Remainder......	3	19	8
Reverse remainder, and *add*.........	8	19	3
	12	18	11

Now, as Artemus Ward would say, why is this thus? The *rationale* of this seeming paradox may be left to be discovered by the reader's ingenuity.

SALLY.

By L. T. MEADE, Author of *Richard Maitland—Consul*, &c.

THE time was midsummer. A girl in a very plain and neatly made cotton dress was standing by an open window. Creepers twined all round the window, some of them peeping into the room. Jessamine, monthly roses, and the deep waxy petals of the magnolia were amongst the blossoms.

A light soft breeze fanned the girl's cheeks and brought into the room great wafts of sweetness from the flowers which surrounded the window and which filled the beds in the garden beneath.

'Hollo, Sally!' exclaimed a gay voice; 'there you are as usual in one of your daydreams. What are you exciting yourself about this morning? It is neither choir-practising day nor school-treat day. As far as I can tell, there is nothing going on—nothing whatever, and yet you look—— Stop dreaming if you can, and let us begin breakfast. Do come and take your place at the head of the table.'

Sally Erskine followed her sister without another word. She seated herself before the tea-tray, and with a quick, rather impatient movement began to perform her office of tea-making.

Anne Erskine cut slices of bread from a loaf, and scolded two round-faced, ruddy-looking boys. Mr Erskine raised his eyes from a letter he was reading, and nodded affectionately to Sally.

Shortly afterwards Sally was heard to exclaim excitedly, after pouncing on a letter beside her plate: 'I've got the scholarship, papa. The scholarship from the *Minerva Magazine*—thirty pounds a year for three years. I am first on the scholarship list. The editor says so; this is his letter. Oh, who would have believed it possible! Now I may go to Newnham or Girton.'

'What does Sally mean by saying she has got a scholarship, Anne?' asked Mr Erskine.

'I'll explain it to you, papa.—Sally, do eat your breakfast, and allow me to speak. You are scarcely responsible at the present moment. —It is this way, papa. Sally and I have taken the *Minerva Magazine* for the last year. You have noticed it, I am sure, for I've seen you reading it. Well, papa, the *Minerva Magazine* offers a big prize—a scholarship they call it—to the girl who comes out first in a certain competition. She has to go through a very stiff training, and the person who adjudges the prize is a real live professor.'

'It is thirty pounds a year for three years. And six hundred girls competed for it. And it isn't a prize; it is a scholarship—the Minerva Scholarship. I'm distinguished for life. Oh, do let me give you another good hug!'

Mr Erskine rose hurriedly to his feet. 'I'm going out,' he said. 'I ought to be in the four-acre field now. See that the boys go off to school in good time, Anne. Sally isn't quite responsible.'

He nodded in a gentle, affectionate way to his family and left the room. Anne hurried her brothers over their breakfast, and Sally, her cheeks flushed, her eyes like stars, read and re-read her precious letter.

As soon as the two girls found themselves alone, Sally looked full at Anne, and said in an emphatic voice: 'Then the matter is quite settled; I go to Newnham in October.'

'My dear Sally, you know how strong our father's prejudice is.'

'We must get over it, Anne. My mind is made up. I shall spend three years at one of the women's colleges, and then start a career of my own.'

'I don't believe our father will consent,' said Anne, 'and even if he did, thirty pounds a year would not cover your expenses.'

'No; but thirty pounds a year will help largely towards them; and then you must not forget I have my share of mother's money. I shall be of age in a few weeks now, and then the money is my own absolutely. Oh, Anne, life seems really worth living at last!'

Sally sprang from her seat at the breakfast-table as she spoke; she was a tall, slightly built girl with clear, open, brown eyes, a round face with rosy cheeks, a good-humoured mouth, and a white, rather broad forehead.

Anne was small, thin, and pale; she was generally considered Sally's inferior both in appearance and ability, but she was far more reliable than her elder sister.

The Erskines were not a rich family. Mr Erskine had inherited a small farm from his father. He was supposed to manage it entirely himself. Whether he did manage it is an open question; he certainly contrived to lose money over it year after year. Sally was the ostensible mistress of the old farm-house, but Anne did most of the work and took more than her share of the trouble. Mr Erskine was gentlemanly and inert. He was fond of his children, but he did not like them to worry him. He disliked undue excitement of any sort. His breakfast hour this morning had not been at all to his taste, and in his heart of hearts he owned to a feeling of regret that Sally should have got the scholarship.

'These new-fangled ideas are the ruin of women,' he murmured as he walked slowly to the four-acre field. 'Sally won't be herself for days after this undue excitement. What will be the consequences? Nothing fit to eat will appear upon the table. Those hard-boiled eggs I ate at breakfast are giving me indigestion already. Oh, if women would but recognise the fact that they are sent into the world to be good daughters first, and good wives afterwards!'

On his way home to early dinner Mr Erskine was overtaken by a pleasant-faced young man, who owned a farm adjoining his own.

'How do you do, Tom?' said Mr Erskine, nodding to him. 'Are you coming to join our dinner? I warn you, you had better not. There'll be nothing fit to eat.' And then he told him of the scholarship and Sally's success. 'But you seem glad at the news!'

'Well,' replied Tom Ross, 'from my own point of view, I suppose I ought to be sorry, because she'll be less inclined than ever to say yes to me. Still,' continued the young man, carried away by a vision of Sally's ecstasy, 'I'm honestly glad for her sake, for she has deserved this prize. I'll come back with you, Mr Erskine, and take my chance of a badly-cooked dinner.'

'Tom,' said Sally, rushing out to meet her lover, and grasping him by the hand, 'I know papa has told you, so I need not go over the news again. Anne and I have been arranging everything, and we have just written to Newnham for particulars with regard to the entrance examination. If all is well, I hope to enter Newnham in October. What's the matter, Tom? Aren't you delighted; don't you congratulate me?'

'Yes, Sally, I congratulate you.'

'Aren't you glad?'

'For your sake I am glad, but'——

'Oh, don't let us have any dismal "buts" to-day. If you intend to be very nice and cheerful, and if you mean to take my part during dinner, you may stay and play tennis afterwards.'

Tom Ross promised vehemently: he would uphold Sally, and look cheerful, and be as nice and as apparently delighted as if he were her brother; nevertheless, he could not help a queer sort of ache which filled his heart whenever he looked at the bright, excited girl. She had never been more charming; her little saucy speeches were never more piquant; her quick, bright, sunshiny way had never proved more fascinating. Even Mr Erskine could not help smiling when he looked at her; and the boys stopped devouring pudding to laugh at her witty remarks; while Anne's small pale face was lit up with absolute worship.

But Tom's heart would go on aching, for he felt down in its depths that Sally was farther away from him than ever. She knew his greatest wish; she knew that he lived for her alone; but he was well aware that the event of to-day had put an almost impassable barrier between him and his hopes.

After dinner Sally addressed him eagerly.

'I shall be three years at Newnham,' she said; 'we won't see much of each other during that time.'

'No,' he replied sadly; 'but if I thought'——

'Oh please, Tom, don't think anything. All my future career is delightfully planned, and I must not disclose it at present, even to you. Oh, how happy I feel! I've only one slight thing left to dread—my little tussle with papa.'

'By the way,' said Ross suddenly, 'I am told that life at one of the women's colleges is expensive. You can't manage to live at Newnham on thirty pounds a year, you know, Sally.'

'No, Tom; but don't you remember, I shall be of age on the first of August, and I am then to have a thousand pounds of my very own. That is my share of mother's money. Anne is to have a thousand pounds also when she's of age. I mean to take some of that money to supplement the thirty pounds a year. Why, Tom, what is the matter? How white you have turned!'

'It's the sun, I expect,' said Ross. 'Let us go and stand in the shade, Sally. Did I hear you aright when you said you were to have a thousand pounds the day you came of age?'

'Yes; that is the half of my mother's money. Can you possibly know anything about it? How queer you look!'

'The sun struck on my head rather fiercely. Shall we have a game of tennis? There's Charlie looking unutterable things at us for not beginning.'

'But *do* you know anything about the money?'

Ross did not answer; he seemed suddenly to have turned deaf.

Sally gave him a queer, perplexed look; then, laughing off an undefined fear, she entered heart and soul into the game.

A couple of days afterwards she found an opportunity to acquaint her father with her decision, and discussed the matter fully while walking beside him. But he uttered a decided negative, and said she would never get his consent to go to college. And he found plenty of old-fashioned opinions to back up his decision.

'I shall never give you permission to go to college; so you had better drop the subject, once and for all.'

'Not once and for all,' said Tom Ross, who had been standing like a sentinel by the roadside, and who now nodded to Sally and joined the group. 'I know all about the matter under discussion, Mr Erskine, and it cannot be dropped in this summary fashion. It must be thrashed out, and you must give adequate reasons for denying Sally her very natural wish.'

What was the matter? Why did Sally suddenly slip her hand out of her father's arm, and give Tom Ross a quick, excited glance of gratitude? And then, why did the little coward put wings to her feet and run away?

Tom linked his arm in Mr Erskine's, and immediately began to speak, and Mr Erskine never even knew that Sally had left them.

Two hours later, Mr Erskine and Tom Ross returned together. Sally was pacing listlessly up and down in front of the house. When Mr Erskine saw his daughter he went at once into the house, but Ross came up to the young girl's side, and taking both her hands in one of his, said, in a voice of some agitation:

'It's all right, Sally; you are to go.'

She turned white when he said this, clasped her hands, and looked away. Sudden tears of relief and joy filled her bright brown eyes.

'Yes, Sally,' continued Ross, 'it's all right for you. You are to have the wish of your heart. You are to go out of this snug little nest into the cold world. You are glad to go. Oh, Sally, Sally, I hope the world will treat you well!'

'Yes, Tom, it will, it will. Oh, I am so excited I can scarcely speak calmly. I can scarcely thank you, dear Tom, but my heart feels full of thanks. You do not know what it would have been to me had this wish of mine come to nothing. I think I should have gone about with a broken heart. Don't laugh, Tom; girls' hearts can be broken when the wish which lies nearest to them is denied.'

'When the wish which lies nearest to them,' repeated Ross, in a sad voice; 'and is this your very, very dearest wish, Sally?'

He looked at her anxiously. His honest blue eyes gazed straight into hers. She returned their glance frankly and fully. Then some message with which they were full seemed to penetrate into her heart and give her pain. She looked away, and a quick blush mounted her cheeks.

'Tom,' she said, 'you are the dearest and best fellow in the world; but I must have my wish; I must go to college and learn all those things which make women strong and brave and useful; those things which are now recognised as part of a good woman's education. I have got brains, and I will use them; I must cease to be a doll.'

'Oh, you were never that,' he answered. A sigh which he could not prevent escaped him. Soon afterwards he took his leave.

That evening Mr Erskine called Sally to him, and said a few words to her.

'I do not approve of your scheme,' he said, 'but I yield to your wishes. Circumstances oblige me to defer my own feelings to yours. You can go to college, Sally, and turn yourself into one of those odious men-women. It is Ross's doing; you have him to thank for it; the fact is you do not half deserve that good fellow's honest affection.'

Sally pouted when her father said this; she was in no mood just now to think much of Tom. The money would be forthcoming; her wish was granted. In October she could go to Newnham, and then, hey, presto! she had all the world before her. Never was a girl happier than this one during the next few weeks.

Sally consulted Ross about each step in her future career. Should she go in for a wranglership? or should she take up classics? or should she be quite modern, and learn French and German so well that they should be considered her native languages?

'I should like to take up every subject,' she exclaimed once or twice in her enthusiasm.

Mr Erskine heard her make a remark of this kind. He was the only one who never laughed or seemed cheerful about her prospects.

'Go in for everything certainly,' he remarked with sarcasm, '*and fail*. That sentence of yours was exactly what I should expect from a woman, Sally.'

But summer days end; and a very abrupt stop was put to this period of mirth and holiday-making.

One morning Mr Erskine did not make his usual appearance at the breakfast-table. Anne went up-stairs to see what was the matter. She found her father looking weak and languid; he said his heart troubled him, and if Anne liked she might send for their old friend Dr Barnes.

The doctor arrived in the course of the morning; he made a careful examination of his patient, and then said some words to poor little Anne which startled her very much. She managed to hide her feelings while in her father's presence, but Sally found her afterwards in a state almost bordering on hysterics, for the old doctor had given Mr Erskine only a few days to live.

Tom Ross appeared on the scene as a matter of course, and was most helpful to the girls. He sat up night after night with the invalid, and did more for his comfort than any hired nurse could have done.

A certain morning came when the young fellow appeared with a blanched face, and asked for Sally.

'Your father wants you,' he said to her. 'He asked for you several times during the night, and now he will not be denied. I do not think he can live out the day, Sally; and—and—I could not help it, dear.'

Tom's look was full of deprecation. Sally wondered what was the matter. What was it that he could not help?

She entered her father's room in her white summer dress, the bloom of early summer in her cheeks and lighting up her eyes. She could not realise that death was already on the threshold of the home. Every one spoke of Mr Erskine's danger, but Sally did not recognise it a bit. She felt sure that he must soon be well again. She entered the room now, hushed in her mood, but by no means despondent.

'Well, dear papa,' she said, her voice set a little lower than its wont, but her tone cheerful. 'You have sent for me, papa; I am so glad you want me,' she continued. Then her eyes fell upon the gray and dying face on the pillow, and all further words were arrested. She dropped on her knees by the bedside, and laid her blooming cheek against the dying man's cold hand.

'I want you to promise me something, Sally,' he said in a harsh and broken voice. 'I have something to tell you, and I want you on your part to make me a promise.'

'Of—of course, papa.'

. . . .

That evening Mr Erskine died. There was mourning and weeping in the house; but, to the surprise of every one, Sally scarcely shed a tear.

Old Dr Barnes did not like her appearance. He said the blow had stunned her, and that in reality she was feeling her bereavement much more than her sister and brothers.

Something had certainly occurred which had taken all the May sunshiny look out of her face. She made no confidences, however, and spent most of her time moping in her own room.

'I shall be quite glad when Sally goes away to Newnham,' said Anne, speaking to Tom Ross. 'I never did know that she was so much attached to papa. All the spring seems taken out of her life.'

Tom made no reply. His own face looked haggard and worn. He was the best of brothers to Anne, but she noticed that he ceased to confide in her. His blue eyes looked full of trouble when she spoke of Sally.

Mr Erskine was dead a fortnight, and Anne seemed slighter and thinner than ever in her deep mourning.

'By the way, Tom,' she continued, looking up at him, 'we know nothing yet about the—the affairs.'

'What affairs, Anne?'

'The money. We don't know how we are left; Mr Johnson, my father's man of business, promised to call to see us, but he has not yet done so. I know that Sally and I inherit a thousand pounds apiece from our mother, but—— What is the matter, Tom? How white you look!'

'Hurrah, hurrah!' shouted a boyish voice. 'Is that you, Anne, croning away as usual? Oh, and Tom Ross is with you, of course. Why, Tom, you're looking pasty. George and I have had *such* a race over the moors. We met the postman, and he gave us a letter. It's for Sally; its her scholarship, I expect. *The Minerva Magazine* is written across the flap of the envelope. Lucky Sally, say I! Wouldn't George and I like to have a dip into that thirty pounds. What is it, Ross? what do you want?'

'Give me that letter,' said Ross.

He took it out of the boy's unwilling hand, then taking him by the shoulders, pushed him gently out of the room.

'Now Anne,' said Ross, coming up to the young girl and speaking eagerly, 'if you like, I'll give this letter to Sally. I expect Charlie is right, and that there is a cheque in it. If so, it will give me just the opportunity I want. Can't you send her down to me here; or, better still, send her into the garden, where I can meet her.'

'How white you look, Tom! and your hand trembles.'

'You know, Anne, what all this means to me. But I can't speak of it even to you. Run, like a dear, and ask Sally to come to me.'

Anne departed, and Tom went out into the garden.

A great excitement was over him; he was shaken out of his habitual calm.

The evening was lovely, and the last rays of a glorious sunset were fading from the sky, when Sally, dishevelled in appearance, red rims round her eyes, and her bright hair pushed untidily back from her forehead, came out into the garden.

She, too, was in black, but her mourning partook of the disordered state of her mind. It was not trim and neat like Anne's, but was put on carelessly. Her black dress did not become Sally. She needed light and soft draperies to set off her peculiar bright beauty.

The girl who advanced timidly now to meet Tom Ross looked something like a delicate flower broken at the roots. She held her garden hat on one arm; her steps were very slow.

'See what I've got for you, Sally,' said Ross.

He came towards her, holding up the letter. She looked at it with listless indifference. He turned the envelope, and showed the words *Minerva Magazine* written across the flap.

'It's the scholarship money, Sally,' he whispered. 'You'll want it, you know, dear, to help towards your expenses at Newnham.'

'I'm not going,' she said, suddenly turning white as death. 'You know that, Tom, and its very, very cruel of you to torture me.'

'I thought you had some stupid idea of that sort in your mind,' said Ross. 'I am very glad you have come out here, so that we may fully talk over the whole matter. Give me your hand, Sally—how cold it is?—Why do you turn away from me? Why have you kept aloof from me during these miserable days?'

'Tom, you know the reason.'

'Yes, my poor little love, I do know. Come, we'll walk up and down here where no one can see us. Sally, I did not want your father to say what he did to you, but I don't think he was quite responsible that morning, and the knowledge weighed on him. I'd have given half of all I possess to save you from the trouble I knew his words would bring.'

'I promised him,' said Sally in a slow, listless voice. 'He told me all about it, and I made my promise. I said I'd give Newnham up. It's not such a trial as you think, Tom,' she continued, looking steadily at him, while tears brimmed into her eyes. 'The heart has gone out of me, somehow, and I never could go in for a wranglership, or any of the nice things I used to talk about, when I felt fresh and springy and young. The dreadful thing about me, however, is this, Tom, that I can't thank *you*—*you*, who have been noble—yes, noble; but I can't thank you.'

'It wasn't noble of me to do things for you. I'd give my life gladly for you, so you can understand that a little money means nothing.'

'Father told me,' continued Sally, 'what you had done. He said he had spent the two thousand pounds which he had in trust for Anne and me, and that you had given it back to him on condition that he let me go to Newnham. He said that he could not die with the load of all this obligation on his mind. He said he must tell me, that I at least must share the secret with him. He said —he said'—continued Sally, now bursting into heart-breaking sobs, 'that my duty was to marry you, and not to be a learned lady.'

'Oh, poor little Sally!' said Ross, gulping down a catch in his throat. 'What if *I* don't agree with him? What if *I* want you to be learned, and wise, and great? You can't turn against my wishes; you can't be my wife if I say no.'

Sally began to dry her eyes with fierce rapidity.

'Tom,' she said, 'the first thing to do is for you to take back that two thousand pounds. I know Anne will not touch it, and of course I will not.'

'I am afraid you are both powerless in the matter, Sally. Half the money is yours when you come of age, which will be in a day or two. Anne will not receive hers for over a year. You cannot give it back to me, my dear,' continued the young man bending towards her, 'without casting dishonour on your dead father. You must keep the money, and you must also keep the secret, in order to shield his memory. You have no other alternative, Sally. I am sorry for you, but I cannot help you in this.'

'Don't speak to me for a minute or two,' said Sally. 'Go away for a few minutes; let me be alone.'

Ross obeyed her at once. She stood and watched his retreating figure. How manly he looked—how upright! He did not want to marry her—he said so. And yet she must keep that hateful, hateful money. As to Newnham! the thought of it was torture in her present mood.

'Tom, Tom,' she called, in a shrill, wild tone.

He turned at once. She ran to meet him.

'Take me!' she said, 'quick, quick, before I change my mind. I'll have you instead of Newnham. I have always loved you; yes, I have always loved you; but I was blind and wilful, and I would not look into my own heart. I did not know half what was in you, and it seemed so dazzling to be learned, and to use one's brains. But I don't care for anything in the world now, except—except you, Tom—and you must have me; you mustn't say no.'

'Is that true, my little darling? Is it true that you love me?'

'Of course it's true; it's the very truest thing on earth.'

'Well then, look here; we'll make a bargain. I'd hate to have a doll for a wife. I adore clever women with heaps of brains. Suppose you go to Newnham in October for my sake; and suppose you pass your examinations for me; and then *afterwards*, Sally—— Oh, what is the matter?'

Ross stopped abruptly, for Sally's arms were flung tightly round his neck, her head rested on his shoulder, and he felt her warm tears.

'I am the happiest girl in the world,' she whispered; 'but it isn't *now* because I have won this'—she threw her unopened letter on the grass—'but because of you; because you love me, and I love you with my whole heart.'

A QUEEN.

She rules with subtle art and skill
  Excelling statesmen's far,
And 'neath her changeful humours still
  Her subjects loyal are;
No heart rebels against her sway,
  Her actions meet no blame;
In all her moods from grave to gay
  Her words attention claim.

Her tiny hands no sceptre hold,
  No purple robe she wears,
Above her shining curls of gold
  No diadem she bears;
But yet to her in beauty bright
  Not Dido famed and fair,
Nor yet that queen, Troy's bane and blight,
  Could ever once compare.

She owns no castles, and no lands,
  No ships, no warlike aid;
Yet ne'er an emperor's commands
  As hers were so obeyed:
My little daughter, aged but four
  Short years, reigns royally
With pout, and frown, and laughter o'er
  Her mother, and o'er me.

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OUR IMPORTED MILK AND CREAM.

By R. Hedger Wallace.

When arable farming is found to be unprofitable, the British farmer is told by his friends to resort to Dairying. The consumer is always ready to advise the farmer, and as he professes to have the agricultural interests of the country very much at heart, the food-producers naturally attempt as far as possible to carry out his wishes, and supply indicated wants.

Thus farmers now only bring the most suitable and fertile soil under arable cultivation, the balance being left under grass and pasturage; and the Agricultural Returns show us that year by year the acreage under grass is steadily increasing. The British farmer has only too good reason to take to dairying. Though he is told on good authority that the sale of wheat is dull and languid and its price low, there is, unhappily, no reason to believe that the margin has been reached at which profits can be realised; for, even at 18 francs a quintal, or 7s. 3d. a hundredweight, wheat grown in France can be sold without loss. And the 'bonanza' farmers of the United States can produce a bushel of wheat for 22 cents. Then the consumer now prefers foreign-grown to home-grown wheat; we are even told that English wheats are now used 'to adulterate' foreign samples. To be brief, the practical position is simply this: Farmers are told by the consumers of their products that they can get their wheat and flour elsewhere, but that they will be pleased to continue dealings if farmers, while competing with foreign producers, see their way to supply them with milk and butter at an exceedingly low figure.

This competition is not hopeless; for milk is too bulky an article for carriage by sea, and one that too quickly perishes to make it a regular source of export from countries so near us as Holland and Sweden. Unluckily, this ray of hope begins to fade away. According to the last Agricultural Returns, we have over 3,900,000 cows in the United Kingdom, and assuming that they each yield 450 gallons of milk yearly (a low average), our annual home production of milk may be said to be about 1,755,000,000 gallons. As to consumption, our population in round figures is about 38,000,000 souls, and if we take a family to consist of seven persons, we then have 5,430,000 such families to supply. Assuming that each family consumes about 80 gallons of milk yearly, we then have an annual consumption of 434,400,000 gallons, leaving about 1,300,000,000 gallons of milk to be used in calf-feeding and butter and cheese making. The Returns show that in 1894 we imported over 161,600 gallons of so-called 'fresh' milk and cream—though we believe that not more than one-third of this quantity actually came as milk, as unfortunately the Custom-house officials in their statistics make no distinction. As compared with our consumption, however, our imported milk is a mere drop in the bucket; but the import is rapidly increasing, and will yet assume larger proportions, for in the first six months of 1895 we imported nearly as much as we did in the twelve months of 1894. It may surely be assumed that the non-agricultural classes do not desire to see those of their fellow-countrymen who are engaged in milk-production placed at a disadvantage when offering their goods in competition with foreign producers, but rather that each side should have fair-play. Does the British milk-producer get it?

Scientific authorities agree that milk is a great carrier of disease, and that nothing is more liable to pick up disease germs; and in the interest of the public the path of those connected with the milk trade simply bristles with Acts of Parliament, Privy-council orders, county and town council regulations, and sanitary inspections. Our cow-houses or byres, dairies, and milk-shops are all subject to inspection and regulation, and the milk offered for sale is open to analysis; the last Local Government Board

Report for England and Wales deals with 15,500 analyses of butter and milk. A Royal Commission reports that 'no doubt the largest part of the tuberculosis which man obtains through his food is by means of milk containing tuberculous matter,' and we straightway make stringent regulations to guard against such milk coming into consumption. If scarlatina, diphtheria, or typhoid fever breaks out in the family of a dairyman, or near to a dairy, we try to avoid contamination, and often even go so far as to put the milk entirely out of reach of human consumption. And even yet we have much to learn : a recent bacteriological examination of the London milk-supply brought out the uncomfortable fact that every sample examined contained specimens of a very unpleasant bacillus ; indicating that, in spite of all our regulations, milk is still stored and distributed under highly defective sanitary conditions.

No one objects to the measures required, least of all those interested in dairying ; it is evidently for the good of all that nothing but good, pure, wholesome milk should be produced and consumed. But the vagaries of the consumer are strange indeed ; he takes care that the milk produced in his own country shall, as far as possible, be pure and free from anything unwholesome, but oddly enough, he is prepared to shut his eyes and swallow anything which is called milk when supplied by a foreigner. He does not stipulate that the imported milk should have come from countries which have sanitary regulations in touch with ours. For all he knows, the imported milk may have been drawn from animals suffering from bovine scarlet fever, or with tuberculous ulcers on the udder. Should it carry infection to his household, with whom rests the blame?

It will be admitted that the households of foreign dairymen are just as liable to suffer from diphtheria and typhoid or scarlet fever as our own ; but the British consumer establishes no safeguards to protect himself from this risk, and has no security that contaminated milk is not imported. Apparently he is quite prepared to use foreign milk, although the milk has been drawn—for all he knows—by some one suffering from scarlet fever ; but he calls out for summary punishment when in his own country any such person is found in or near a cowhouse, dairy, or milk-shop. Does the consumer think this is giving his own countrymen fair-play? Equity demands that foreign importations should be under such restrictions and regulations as shall guarantee that imported milk has been produced and handled under sanitary regulations as complete and carefully enforced as our own. Since milk and cream are the most perfect carriers of disease known, even if the foreign producers could bring proof that their supplies have been secured under the same sanitary regulations as *are compulsory* on the milk-producers of the United Kingdom, still special regulations and sanitary precautions would be necessary as affecting its transit and shipment. Otherwise we would still be liable to have disease transmitted to us which has been picked up by the way.

Here is the question for non-agricultural readers : If it be your desire that the milk consumed by you shall be produced under such sanitary conditions as you think will protect you from disease and vouch for its purity and wholesomeness, can you explain why, in 1894, you consumed over 160,000 gallons of milk and cream that were absolutely devoid of any guarantee that the slightest sanitary precaution or regulation—such as in self-preservation you exact from your own countrymen—has been adopted or even attempted with regard to its production, transit, or sale?

Another abuse demands a remedy. This foreign milk and cream may come to us either in the ordinary form, or as frozen milk, or as simply condensed milk—that is, concentrated without the use of sugar. Now, not a drop of this foreign importation has any right to be called 'fresh,' or sold as such. It is an article which should be labelled and sold as 'preserved ;' for, to enable it to keep, it has been treated with antiseptics, principally boracic acid, it is believed.

The use of antiseptics as milk preservatives is the slovenly expedient of a bad dairy manager. It certainly makes it less easy for the customer to distinguish between milk from a clean, well-managed dairy, and milk from a dirty and unhealthy one. The British dairyman, it is true, also uses antiseptics, but only occasionally—when he wishes to keep over a surplus of milk till next delivery, for example. But this is wrong ; and his best friends condemn antiseptics, and would like to see their use specially forbidden. These milk preservatives are known to dairymen under a number of fancy names, but almost all contain either boracic acid, salicylic acid, or benzoic acid. According to La Croir, benzoic acid is a more powerful preservative than salicylic acid, which Liebermann and Meyer consider the most powerful of food preservatives in common use. It has been proved that preservatives are unnecessary, as even in the very hottest weather fresh milk in cans will keep without any taint for sixteen hours, notwithstanding their being jolted in a cart. Antiseptics have been proved to be unnecessary even under the trying conditions of an Australian summer's day. If milk does not keep sweet for so long, then it is either not fresh, or it has been put into dirty cans. A milk preservative that has come to us from Germany is known as 'formalin,' a forty per cent. aqueous solution of formic aldehyde. The editor of a scientific journal published the other day the analysis of a sample of milk obtained from a well-known establishment in London, which showed that, though the milk was excellent in quality, formalin had clearly been employed as a preservative. Now, this substance is an exceedingly powerful chemical hardening agent ; but if hardening agents are put into it, milk will be as dangerous as tea with its tannin. The astonishing fact is that formalin is a strong poison—so much so, that the German manufacturers urgently recommend their customers in Germany and other continental countries to abstain from adding it to any article of food or drink. The use of formalin is much more common on the Continent than with us, and it would be interesting to know to what extent our imported milk and cream have been preserved with it.

Salicylic acid is also obnoxious, inasmuch as those who take milk preserved by its means are innocently dosing themselves with a drug which will retard or arrest digestion, and even affect the heart. Nor does it give security against all disease germs, though it kills cholera bacilli. Antiseptics are, without doubt, injurious to all who, being constant milk-drinkers, consume them regularly, and especially to children. There is no doubt whatever that practically the whole of this foreign milk and cream is treated with antiseptics to insure its keeping.

As already noted, it is boracic acid that is chiefly used for the purpose. Meyer's experiments show that three and three-quarter grains of boracic acid per pint are necessary for it to have any good effect as a milk preservative. Now, the minimum medicinal dose for a child three years of age is one grain, and the maximum dose six grains. So that a child of three years of age who daily drinks a pint of milk preserved with boracic acid, will be daily receiving fairly strong doses of the drug; and should this continue for two or three months running, it must injuriously affect the child. Against disease germs boracic acid is powerless. Lazarus and Freudenreich agree in condemning the use of all chemical preservatives in milk.

All milk consumers should bear in mind three facts. First, that in dairying the use of antiseptics is entirely uncalled for, and that they are never employed in any good dairy. Secondly, that when used in Britain, even by second-rate dairymen, it is only occasionally, to meet some difficulty which through ignorance or laziness they are unable otherwise to safely overcome. Thirdly, that the importation of foreign milk and cream is only possible by the regular and systematic use of antiseptics.

It is well to draw attention to our foreign importations of milk and cream while the trade is but in its infancy, and before it develops. Now is the time to make such regulations as will assure us that, in purity and wholesomeness, this milk is equal to what is home-produced; for perhaps the day may come when, as with our wheat and flour supply, we may be dependent on imports from foreign sources for over seventy per cent. of our milk-supply. All the advices we receive indicate that our continental neighbours intend to develop this industry, specially Holland; the Belgian Government designs to develop this trade at an outlay of £25,000 for three years; and from Denmark we learn that a company at Copenhagen has completed arrangements for the regular export of frozen milk, erected the necessary plant, and entered into contracts for the delivery of 110,000 pounds of milk weekly. Freezing milk, it should be noted, does not kill disease germs.

We largely import milk in another form, tabulated by the Customs officials as 'condensed or preserved;' but, as we have already shown, what is termed 'fresh' in our statistics is nothing of the kind, but is specially preserved. In 1894 we imported over 529,000 cwt. of condensed milk, valued at over a million sterling. Here, again, we are seemingly willing to waive all guarantees. Condensed milk is simply milk which has a large proportion of its water evaporated, and is preserved by combination with sugar. What security have we that the milk was originally produced under the conditions we think necessary for safe-guarding our own milk-supply? What guarantee have we that antiseptics were not added to the milk before being submitted to the process of condensation, or during the process? The introduction of the centrifugal separator has revolutionised the art of dairying, and at the same time it has raised milk adulteration into a science. Separated milk is pure fresh milk, with the butter fat taken out—in other words, fresh skim milk. It cannot be called 'whole' milk, but it may be called both pure and fresh. In former days, the dairyman who desired to make four pints of rich milk equal six pints, had recourse to the pump; now he adds separated milk, and knows that he is not so liable to be found out, for by judicious adulteration of rich whole milk with separated milk, he can defy the lactometer. Some of the condensed milk in the market is little better than separated milk. The Special Commission of the *British Medical Journal* reported that seventeen brands of so-called condensed milk were found to consist of condensed separated milk, containing exceedingly low percentages of fat—so low as to be negligible quantities in so far as the consumer is concerned. Now the usual standard adopted by public analysts is 3 per cent. of fat, while the Somerset House lowest limit is 2·75 per cent.

If the foreign milk came to us from such sources as Bolle's dairies in Berlin, it might have safely been welcomed; or if it had been exported from Copenhagen, where the regulation of the milk trade is so exemplary that such a thing as tainted or adulterated milk is rarely heard of. But there is too much reason to believe that the milk that was imported into this country last year would not have been accepted for consumption either in Berlin or Copenhagen. As our sanitary regulations are at present adjusted, they affect only the home milk-producer, and accordingly the foreign producer at present has the field to himself—no inquisitive questions being asked.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XXVII.—THE HOUR OF SUCCESS.

Brant wrote his defiant letter to Whitehall, and then turned matters over in his mind.

'That Levvinson's a fox,' he said to himself in mute admiration of the man's cunning. 'Wouldn't be in the matter a bit, and he would lick me. Fox with two tales—no, a dozen. Well, I must be sharp too. Things may go wrong. Why shouldn't I have a second hole for bolting in case things do go to the bad? By George, I will.'

The result of his self-communings was that the same evening he made his way to Endoza's flat in Victoria Street.

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The Count was out, but Miss Endoza was at home, the servant said, and Brant was shown in at once, as a consequence of various half-crowns which had fallen into the man's hand when helping with hat or coat.

'You, at last!' was Isabel's greeting. 'I began to think you had gone off somewhere with Renée to get married.'

It was on Brant's lips to utter some angry retort, for he was growing very weary of Isabel's childish coquetry, and felt ready to come to an open rupture and end a connection which had been growing wearisome, and which, now that he had pretty good hope of there being an unbridgeable gulf between Renée and Wynyan, he felt more than ever burdensome.

But matters were not yet ripe, and he met her pouting look with a smile.

'No, you didn't, little one; you gave me credit for better taste.'

'Not I,' said Isabel, turning away from him. 'I'm sure you are desperately fond of her, and you tell me nothing but untruths.'

'What a beautiful little tyrant it is!' he said.

'Not half so beautiful in your eyes as Mademoiselle Renée.'

'Shan't answer you—shan't defend myself, because this is all talk, and you know better,' cried Brant.

'No, I do not; and the sooner everything is at an end the better, for I'm not going to break my poor little heart about such a fickle man.'

'Fickle! Oh, come, I like that!' said Brant, laughing. 'And if I were not a man, I think I ought to talk about breaking hearts. Oh, I say, beauty, you shouldn't torture me like this now I have come.'

'Well, you deserve it, sir. I'm horribly disappointed in you, I am indeed. You profess to love me, and yet you have nothing hardly to say. There is no passion—no romance.'

'What?'

'I say no romance. It's all cold matter of fact, just as if I were English.'

'But you are so unreasonable, beauty,' cried Brant. 'This isn't Deconcagua.'

'No; unhappily no,' said Isabel, with the tears in her eyes. 'No bright nights, no fireflies, no oranges or lemons or olives.'

'Get out!' cried Brant. 'Plenty of bright nights. Look at the gas; look at the lamps on hansoms and carriages; and as for fireflies, I'll be bound to say that our electric lights beat them hollow.'

'No fruit, no flowers.'

'Heaps at Covent Garden; and as to olives, I'll go to Fortnum and Mason's first thing to-morrow, and buy you a bottle.'

Isabel sighed.

'Everything is so terribly matter of fact and commonplace. Ah, you should hear the music and serenading in Deconcagua.'

'Ah, we don't get much of that here, except with the street bands, and at the theatres. You wouldn't have me come with a guitar, and begin strumming down below on the pavement.'

'Why not?' cried Isabel eagerly. 'Some night when all is hushed and still, beneath the clear moonbeams.'

'Never is hushed and still,' protested Brant, laughing. 'There's generally a hansom on the way; and when there isn't that, there's sure to be a policeman on the tramp.'

'Ah, now you mock at me,' cried Isabel.

'Not I; serious as a judge, little beauty. I'll come the first clear night and serenade you.'

'You will?' cried the girl excitedly. 'Then swear.'

'Whole truth, and nothing but the truth; kiss the book,' said Brant solemnly. 'I say though, what lovely pearls! A present from the Count?'

'Ah now, that's like what you used to be,' cried Isabel, brightening up, so that Brant was fain to confess she was very pretty. 'The pearls? You shouldn't ask. Do you like them, Brant?'

'Yes, of course,' he replied. 'I say, though; it's all very well, but how was I to go on being the same as I used to be, when a certain lady was always pitching me over for some one else, and nearly driving me mad with jealousy.'

'I wasn't,' said Isabel, letting the hand he took stay in his after a very faint struggle to escape. 'You never cared enough for me.'

'What? Oh, I say! Of all the cruel little beauties! I was at last afraid to be as fond of you as I wanted to be. It was so maddening.'

Isabel shook her head.

'That's right; don't believe me.'

'It was the other way on, Brant,' she said softly, as she began picking at one of the brilliant rings on her fingers, so as to allow that hand to be imprisoned too.

'Now you are talking in riddles,' he said.

'No. You were always making me miserable by being so fond of Renée.'

'Renée's a cold marble statue with no more life in her than—than—— Well, you know what I mean.'

'Some people are very fond of cold marble statues,' sighed Isabel.

'For ornaments in the front hall.'

'Do you want to have Renée for an ornament to your front hall?' cried Isabel, shrinking from him, and trying to draw away her hand.

'You know I don't, beauty,' he whispered earnestly. 'Haven't I shown you ever since we first met how I loved the beautiful piquant little birdie? I want no ornaments in front halls; I want you always in my breast, and to feel that you nestle there, and'——

'I say, Brant.'

'Yes, but don't struggle so to get away.'

'Why not? The lady did in that play.'

'What play?' he said, as he drew her nearer.

'That one where the gentleman talked as you did then.'

'Oh, I say!' he cried. 'You are too bad, when every word was all true and original. Acting, am I? Is that acting—and that—and that—and that?'

He clasped her in his arms, and kissed her again and again, while for a few moments she resigned herself to his caresses, and then began to struggle so violently, that in a fit of temper he let her go.

'Oh, very well!' he said sulkily.

'Papa!' she whispered; and darted away through one door, while Brant turned sharply to the other, where Villar Endoza stood silent and stern, with the light upon his face, giving him more than ever the look of an old Spanish portrait.

The two men stood gazing at each other for a few moments in silence, Brant flushed and, to use his own expression, 'staring like a fool,' Endoza calm, and with his face diplomatically expressionless, and giving no key to his opinions upon the scene, a portion at least, and probably the most of which he must have witnessed.

Then he bowed in his most stately manner, and pointed to a chair.

'That's better,' thought Brant, and he sat down, Endoza slowly following his example, crossing his legs, and leaning back with his eyes half closed.

'Now, Mr Dalton,' he said gravely, 'I am at your service. You wished to see me.'

'Yes, of course,' cried Brant, recovering his equanimity to some extent. 'The fact is, Count, I have for some time past been thinking over the proposal you made to me.'

'The proposal I made to you, Mr Dalton?' said Endoza with an inquiring look.

'Yes, of course. Don't you remember what you said about Deconcagua—what a grand country it was?'

'Oh yes. It is a grand country, Mr Dalton. Magnificent!'

'Exactly; and what fine opportunities there were for young and enterprising men.'

'Y-e-e-e-s!'

'And suggested to me that if I would throw in my lot with you, and go over, with my experience as an engineer'——

The Count smiled faintly.

'You could offer me a position at once, where I could win wealth, title, decoration, and that sort of thing, and—er—er—that there was every reason for me to expect that I might marry—er—er—form a matrimonial alliance with some beautiful wom—lady of birth and position.'

'Indeed! Did I say that?'

Endoza's face was a wonder of calm inquiry; eyes, brow, lips, all seemed to be asking the question at the same time.

'Oh yes; you said that, sir, more than once to me,' cried Brant; 'but of course such a step required a good deal of thinking about.'

'Naturally,' said the Count blandly. 'A man should be very particular in such a case.'

'Exactly so, sir. Well, as a business man I have been very particular, and I have thought it out carefully. For you see, Count, it meant for me giving up a big position in connection with our firm, and risking a great deal; but circumstances have—er—so shaped themselves, that I have come to the conclusion that I would accept your offer.'

'You would accept my offer,' said Endoza thoughtfully; and he deliberately changed the position of his legs, giving the left, which had borne the right, a rest and a ride in its turn.

'Yes, sir,' cried Brant, warming up now. 'You see the truth must out. For a long time past I've been getting desperately fond of Isabel, and she loves me in return, and I feel sure that you will do everything you can to make us happy.'

Brant felt that he had spoken out in a thoroughly frank, manly fashion, and he stopped now, congratulating himself, and waiting for the Count to take his hand, shake it warmly, give him a few words of encouragement, and make him think that he would be no loser by the change.

But Endoza showed not the slightest trace of emotion; his face remained perfectly blank and expressionless, and he sat back nursing the resting leg, and gazing at Brant through his half-closed eyes.

'I'm afraid, Mr Dalton,' he said at last, in the most velvety tones, 'there has been some misunderstanding here.'

'What? Oh no, not a bit,' cried Brant. 'You remember what you said?'

'About the opening for a young man—a clever engineer in my country?'

'Yes, of course, to me over and over again.'

'*To* you, yes, Mr Dalton, but not *of* you,' said the Count blandly.

'What?'

'The fact is, Mr Dalton, I was thinking of quite another gentleman at the time.'

'You—you were thinking of—of some one else?' faltered Brant.

'Certainly, my dear sir. My memory is very clear and good. I mentioned no names; perhaps I had better now. I was thinking what an admirable thing it would be for my country if I could induce Mr Wynyan to join us out there.'

'Curse Mr Wynyan!' cried Brant, springing up in a passion.

'I think you English have a proverb about curses, Mr Dalton,' said Endoza with a smile; 'I have heard it, but I cannot quite recall the words. You have been in error, my dear sir, so we had better clear away all misunderstandings at once. You were in error about that matter, and you are in error about my dear child.'

'No, sir, I swear'——

'Don't, pray, my dear sir. Let me assure you. She is but a sweet innocent child—too girlish and young to even think about such matters. You are in error, sir, and it is my duty to reprove you for your conduct towards her. In my own country I would have felt it my duty to call you severely to account, but in this cold damp place, I am but a diplomat, and if I had serious cause against you there would be no duel: I should have to appeal to a lawyer, I suppose. But there, you are young and impetuous. I saw what passed: you forgot your duty to the host who has made you welcome in his house, and the poor child fought bravely and well against your advances. Señor Dalton, we do not approach a lady in that fashion in my beloved land. But you Englishmen—— Ah, well! I will not rake up the past. Central America can tell a sad story of the attacks of English filibusters and buccaneers.'

'Count Villar Endoza!' cried Brant; 'if you think'——

'Tut-tut! my dear sir, do not raise your voice—do not be angry. I came here to make friends, not enemies. I, in my large heartedness, made an error in asking you here. You, in your English impetuous way, made two—the first about my words, the second with respect to my dearest child. But we will part as friends, and in forgiveness. Go back to your business and learn to be a great engineer, and then marry the pretty cousin. There,' he said, rising, 'I must send off despatches. Let us shake hands and say good-bye.'

'No: we will not say good-bye, sir. Isabel'——

'Hush! here she is,' said Endoza, as, perfectly calm now, Isabel entered the room, looking keenly from one to the other. 'Ah, my darling,' he cried, 'come here. Mr Dalton and I have been talking about that little scene. You do not wish to wait a few years, and then marry Mr Dalton?'

'Oh no, *padre mio*,' cried the girl, flinging herself into his arms.

'There, Mr Dalton, you see I am right,' said Endoza, smiling. 'Now, sir, good-morning. I must ask you to leave us entirely alone. Our acquaintance is at an end.'

Brant stared at him for a moment or two in utter amazement, and tried to speak, but no words would come. Then, catching up hat and cane from where they occupied a chair, he strode out of the room and down the great staircase into the hall, where the first person he encountered was Levvinson, who passed him quickly with a smile and a nod.

For a few moments the scene in the Count's drawing-room filled Brant's brain, and with his teeth set he strode on.

'That's it, is it?' he muttered. 'Pitched overboard. No more use to him, and I may go. Two can play at some games, old chap. Just now too, when the game's up. "Oh no, *padre mio*," eh? Tchah! we shall see. "Go back to business; learn to be an engineer, and marry the pretty cousin," eh? No, my dear, smooth, Spanish emissary, that game's up, and this is a better mine to work. Curse Wynyan! Always Wynyan. Stop a moment.'

His thoughts influenced his legs, for he stopped short in the street and half turned back.

'What was Levvinson doing there? I didn't know he knew Endoza. What! The foreign government—the plans and drawings sold? Why, you blank blind fool! it was for him—and I never thought of that. Thinking of Mr Wynyan, was he; and now he'll get him to go out there and make his fortune out of the cursed thing I —— Oh, I say, am I going mad?'

'Aren't you well, sir?'

'Eh, well?' said Brant in response to the rough, friendly advance of a bluff-looking policeman who took his arm. 'Oh yes, Robert, it's all right. A little giddy—that's all. Just see me into a cab.'

'It's them big drinks as do it,' said the constable to himself, as he saw the cab he had hailed drive off. 'Your champagnes and burgoinies and things like that. Much better stick to a drop o' good old English beer. That chap's brain is all like yeast, and if he don't mind, he'll be having a good big doctor's bill.'

THE ENGLISH ARMY OF THE 'FORTY-FIVE.'

Let us realise, if we can, the quaint soldiers of the time of George II. The coats were loose and long, with broad lapels laced with gold, and adorned with a multiplicity of heavy buttons, yellow cotton being substituted for gilt in the case of the privates. In marching or on parade the skirts were folded back and buttoned behind, to give freedom to the leg. Beneath the coat was the indispensable waistcoat—to all intents and purposes a second coat—with an infinitude of smaller buttons. The legs were cased in breeches and spatterdashes, the latter reaching above the knees. The officers carried half-pikes, replaced after Fontenoy with 'spontoons,' which were simply half-pikes with larger blades; halberts and long swords with brass hilts were the weapons of the non-commissioned officers. The conical sugar-loaf hat was general in the line; but in the artillery and cavalry, the clubbed pigtail was surmounted with a huge, three-cornered hat fringed with gold-lace, such lace in the case of the privates being of cotton. The three-cornered hat, by the way, was common to all the officers. The men carried muskets with bright barrels, 'browning' being unknown; while short swords with basket hilts, and bayonets, depended from the broad, clumsy waist-belts. As if the equipment was not sufficiently clumsy, heavy, and cumbrous, huge cartridge-boxes, with a brazen 'G. R.' sprawling over the flaps, depended from the waist-belts. Such was the martial panoply in which the British soldier of that period went to war.

The state into which the English army had fallen in 1740 was pitiable: the reader will gain some idea of it by referring to Hogarth's 'March to Finchley,' painted in 1746. The speech which John, Duke of Argyll, delivered in 1740, touches the administration of the army, the manner in which commissions were granted, the lack of *esprit de corps*, and the interest and favouritism by which promotion was alone obtainable. 'To make the army useful,' said the Duke, 'it ought to be under the sole command of one man, exalted to the important trust by his known skill, courage, justice, and fidelity, and uncontrolled in the administration of his province by any other authority. . . . Those who have most opportunity of observing military merit have no power of rewarding it; and therefore every man endeavours to obtain *other recommendations* than those of his superiors in the army, and to distinguish himself by *other services* than attention to his duty and obedience to his commanders. . . . Our generals are only colonels with a higher title, without power and without command. . . . To gratify the leaders of the ministerial party, the most despicable triflers are exalted to an authority; and those whose want of understanding excludes them from any other employment are selected for military commissions. . . . We have seen the same animals to-day cringing behind a counter, and to-morrow swelling in a military dress. We have seen boys sent from school in despair of improvement and entrusted with military command . . . and every man who is too stupid or infamous to learn or carry on a trade has been placed by this great dispenser of honours [Walpole] above the necessity of application or the reach of censure.' To such a state of degradation had the English army sunk, that Dorrington says it was common for tradesmen and others in difficulties to enlist in the Foot-guards. This was done with the collusion of commanding officers, the latter, in consideration of receiving their pay, exempting them from military duty. As the uniform protected them from arrest, the object of these shopkeeper soldiers will be readily understood.

Apart from the great military experience of John, Duke of Argyll, every word of this extract deserves to be considered by the reader, its truth being borne out by the writers and novelists of the day. It is not sufficient to say that no inducement was held out to the officer to distinguish himself; he was positively *discouraged* from showing himself a capable and meritorious soldier. He knew perfectly well that if he *did* distinguish himself, officers who might not have been in the action were certain to be elevated over his head. The man must have interest, or, failing interest, must be 'able to sing a good song;' and 'if he had a handsome wife or sister' (we are quoting from Charles Johnston), 'so much the better.' To those who know anything of the corruption of the time, the inference will be obvious. A young man then *invested* his money in the purchase of a commission because it would bring him a fixed income for his money. Knowing that no efforts of his own would advance him, or procure him an addition to his pay, he was 'satisfied to enjoy his bargain as easily as he could.' The case was the same with those who 'got into the army by interest.' They depended on the same interest to push them forward, and gave themselves no trouble to deserve a promotion, 'which they were convinced no desert of their own could ever procure them.'

With all this, the officer of George II., whatever his social standing, was liable to petty annoyances which would be possible only in an army commanded by a martinet. For instance, in February 1748, Lord Robert Bertie (third son of Robert, first Duke of Lancaster), afterwards general in the army, and colonel of the 2d Regiment of Foot-guards, received a reprimand, such reprimand being conveyed to him by the Duke of Cumberland's aide-de-camp. His military offence was that he had blown his nose, *as he relieved guard*, beneath his grace's window in St James's Palace: this, and this only, was all he had done. It was said there were at this time at least a hundred and fifty officers who desired to resign through sheer disgust and annoyance at their equivocal position. It is not in a military school of this kind that capable officers are made.

Henry Hawley, lieutenant-general, commander-in-chief of the forces in Scotland in 1745, was a fair type of the general officer of that period. Hawley commanded the second line of cavalry at Fontenoy, and commanded troops also at Culloden. We know that he was compelled to make an ignominious retreat from the Highlanders at Falkirk, losing seven out of his ten pieces of cannon. In allusion to his frequent recourse to capital punishment, his soldiers had dubbed him 'Chief-justice,' and 'Hangman Hawley.' General Wolfe, who served under this martinet, wrote of him: 'The troops dread his severity, hate the man, and hold his military knowledge in contempt.' That such an officer should distinguish himself by his cold-blooded cruelty after Culloden, is scarcely astonishing.

A sad memento of this incompetent savage still exists in the blackened ruins of Linlithgow Palace. On the night of the 17th of January 1746, General Hawley paused there in his retreat before the Highland forces of Prince Charles Edward, of whom only the day before he had expressed the utmost contempt. He quartered his demoralised troopers in the chambers of the palace, where they kindled such blazing fires that the safety of the building was endangered. A lady of the Livingstone family, who occupied some of the apartments, expostulated with the general on their reckless proceedings, and receiving a contemptuous rejoinder, retorted with spirited irony, that she 'could run away from fire as fast as he could.' She took horse accordingly for Edinburgh; but ere she dismounted, the palace was in flames, and by the following night there remained only a blackened ruin. The roofless walls, mellowed with the tints of another century, remind us of the incapable soldier who, in sheer culpable carelessness, destroyed one of the finest monuments of Scottish antiquity.

The military punishments of that day were terrible. The Duke of Cumberland's general orders contain on *three consecutive days* sentences of eight hundred, five hundred, and eight hundred lashes for thieving, 'mutinous expressions,' and 'insolent behaviour.' Three days afterwards a sentence of 'one thousand lashes' is recorded: it is fair to say the man deserved to die; but death would have been a merciful punishment. A martinet of that day might be and was a terrible tyrant to his men. Strange, out-of-the-way punishments were inflicted for trifling offences, without adding one iota to the efficiency of the army. The soldier might either be 'picketed' or made to ride the 'wooden horse.' In 'picketing,' the culprit's naked heel rested on a sharpened stake driven into the ground, his right wrist and right leg being drawn up as high as they could be to a hook fixed in an adjoining post. The whole weight of the body rested on the sharpened stake, which, though it did not break the skin, inflicted exquisite torture; the only means of alleviation was to rest the weight on the wrist, the pain of which soon became unendurable. Soldiers were frequently sentenced to stand on the 'picket' for a quarter of an hour; and in the cavalry it was often inflicted by order of the colonel, without authority of court-martial.

The back of the 'horse' was formed of planks so arranged as to form a sharp ridge eight or nine feet long. The legs (six or seven feet in length) rested on a stand moving upon wheels; to complete the resemblance, a rough wooden head and tail were added. The offender was placed on the back with his hands tied behind him; and to increase the punishment, a heavy musket was not unfrequently tied to his legs. This punishment, which might be inflicted by sentence of court-martial, or by order of the colonel of a regiment, wrought so much injury to those subjected to its discipline, that it had to be discontinued. Francis Grose tells us that, so late as 1760, the remains of a wooden horse were standing on the parade at Portsmouth.

A charge of cowardice against British officers is rare, and we are not surprised to find the only case we have met with occurring at this degenerate time. An artillery officer was 'broke'—as it was called—for cowardice after the battle of Falkirk, in 1746. The sight must have been a degrading one even in an age which was not distinguished either for delicacy or refinement. 'The line being ordered out under arms, the prisoner was brought to the head of the oldest brigade, completely accoutred, when, his sentence being read, his commission was cancelled, his sword broken over his head, his sash cut in pieces and thrown in his face, and lastly, the provost-marshal's servant giving him a kick in the rear, turned him out of the line.' So the poor degraded man—whose want of nerve was probably due to the hard-drinking habits of his time—went his way.

We have seen something of the officers, something of the discipline, something of the military 'system,' such as it was, and it seems to us that our subject would hardly be complete without mention of the commander-in-chief, William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland. Shutting our eyes to what was said of him after Culloden, our duty is impartially to consider him in his character of a military commander. That the Duke was on the whole popular with the officers and men who served under him is borne out by the testimony of General Wolfe, and the generally censorious Horace Walpole. But his tactical ability was small; and his memory (with the single exception of Culloden, fought against irregular troops dispirited by dissension) is connected only with disaster and defeat. He commanded at Fontenoy, where he was defeated by Marshal Saxe in such fashion that all that was really left to him was to compass his own retreat. In 1757 he allowed Marshal d'Estrées to enclose him between the Elbe, the Weser, and the German Ocean—the result of his extraordinary generalship being that he was compelled, on the 8th of September, to sign the inglorious convention of Closterseven (disowned by his own father), by which the Electorate of Hanover was left in the hands of the French, while the whole confederate army, some forty thousand Hessians, Hanoverians, and Brunswickers, were disarmed and disbanded.

Not being received after this achievement with all those signs of satisfaction which he seems to have expected, he threw up his appointments in high disgust, and took no further share in any civil or military transaction. It would be curious to inquire how far, up till the re-organisation of our system of army administration elaborated this autumn, the 'Horse Guards,' in its mismanagement of English military matters—its contempt of reproof, objurgation, and appeal—was still governed by the obsolete traditions of William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland.

AN ADVENTUROUS WEEK.

CHAPTER III.

We had been four days among the Sphakiots—four healthy, exciting, memorable days. I had shot a Turk, and made up my mind that, come what might, I would not fire at another man. The poor fellow had come almost up to my revolver in clambering over the rocks; and, to save myself, I pulled the trigger, severely wounding him. To the patriots it was a proof of the genuineness of my sympathy with them; but to myself it was nothing of the kind. I had almost taken the life of a man—in self-defence it is true, and not in pure wantonness—but my very uncomfortable feelings on the subject prove clearly to myself that I was a better civilian than soldier.

There was joy in Sphakia. After the Zurra affair, for two days and the better part of two nights, it seemed to the patriots that they had only one thing left to them—to divide the island among themselves. Greece was a fine enough name to conjure with, and the *Panhellenion* periodically brought them arms, black rice (alias 'gunpowder'), and provisions. But few indeed were the Athenians who came to put themselves in the way of Turkish bullets and knives. And therefore, argued Sphakia, though Greece deserved thanks, she did not merit Crete. Crete, in fact, should be independent, and the Sphakiots should administer the island.

Naylor enjoyed himself. He said so, and looked like it. He wrote much 'copy,' but was unable to get rid of it. The *Osman*, we heard, had returned to Constantinople, and though there were two or three cunning little craft in the bays of the coast under the mountains, they were unable to get out for the Turkish cruisers. These last we could see from our eyries, the drift of their funnel smoke lying in motionless, long lines across the horizon, above the sparkling water.

'Never mind,' said Naylor, when I remarked upon his useless expenditure of energy with ink and paper. 'A time will come. My narrative bristles with actuality, and sooner or later it will get a billet.'

We had a companion here among the rocks and snow-drifts in the crevices; one Gaston de Blessant, a roving blade like Naylor himself, only with tastes more classic than ours. He was a lively, open-hearted fellow, with Homer at his tongue tip. He was also a capital shot, as the Moslems had learned to their sorrow.

The three of us were honoured guests with the mountaineers, and though we were willing enough to take pot-luck with the patriots, the best of everything obtainable was given to us first of all. Not that 'the best' meant much. But it meant good wine, which was something; and it meant plenty of mutton and hard Sphakia cheese.

Meanwhile, the news of the Zurra incident had reached Canea. It was received furiously—so we heard. Warm reprisals were expected, and we prepared for them. The blockhouse on its perch, with some four hundred Turks in it, still stood as a menace to our part of Sphakia, though daily half-a-dozen or more of the warriors engaged in desperate sorties upon us never re-entered it!

It was now decided to storm the blockhouse without loss of time. That done, Sphakia might again acclaim itself, and there would be fair cause for hope that the Moslems might in a month or a year be expelled the island for ever.

Each hour saw an addition to Thyatis's forces after this determination had been made. They came from the plain of Anapolis to the south on the seaboard, and from Askyfo to the east. And there was hardly any direction in which we could look among the gray needles and crags of the Madara Vouna whence blue-breeched, long-legged mountaineers had not by twos and threes scrambled into our midst. They all moved with the agility of goats, and with their gun-barrels ready at an instant's notice to be levelled at a red-coat.

The night before the attack, our village gave itself up to revels. All took part in them: old white-haired men, women, girls, and children. And we Europeans did our little best to add to the fun.

While there was daylight, shooting at the Turk's head was the sport most relished. This effigy (not a real head, thank goodness!) provided Naylor, poor fellow, with a telling paragraph or two about the Sphakiot as a marksman. I could do nothing with it at any creditable distance; but both Naylor and De Blessant were applauded by the crowd for their skill.

Dancing and eating and drinking followed. There were also prayers in the little church. The priest's maledictions on his country's oppressors were evidently joined in heartily by the congregation. For my part, however, I was even more struck by the picture made by these stalwart insurgents as they packed the dimly-lit, mildewed building. I declare the fire in their eyes was a better illuminant than the lamps overhead. The clink of their arms and ornaments was also more melodious than the worthy priest's eccentric chanting.

The improvised songs by the bonfires later, with wine passing freely, were as odd as the priest's discordancies. The vocalists put us in their stanzas, and civilly exaggerated our good qualities, or what they took for such. De Blessant translated some of their eulogistic adjectives. These ought to have stimulated us very much.

But the chants were not all warlike. The Sphakiot is as ardent in love as in his hatred of the Turk, and he shows it in his verse. I was fain to finger the rose-leaves in my waistcoat pocket when these softer sentiments were in the air, to the accompaniment of the native 'bulgarie,' a rude kind of mandoline. But alas! I felt more and more that Helena Nicolopoulos was destined to become little better than a dream-image to me. How could I, after my conduct with these insurgents, ever again hope to be allowed to walk openly to Khalepa and the rose-bowered garden? Unless, indeed, the insurrection succeeded—a consummation scarcely likely, according to precedent. Yet even as a mere dream-image this lovely girl was dear to me.

We three sat together among the five or six leaders of the Sphakiots. The mountains formed a black wall close behind the village, the houses of which seemed to advance and recede with the rising and dwindling of the flames of the fires.

De Blessant diverted us with his presentiments. He pretended to be as superstitious as the mountaineers themselves.

'That's all stuff, you know,' said Naylor, with a laugh. The Frenchman had declared gravely that he knew he should fall on the morrow.

'I do not think so, my friend,' retorted De Blessant. 'Protect my body from outrage; that is all I beg of you.'

'All right, old chap; and we'll drink a bottle of Parnasse with it in Athens by-and-by.'

'You English are so cold,' protested the other. 'I am in love too. That is the sadness of it. But, *mon Dieu*, it cannot be helped.'

This with a downright French shrug.

'He jests at wounds who doesn't mean to get one,' said Naylor: 'that's about it, isn't it, Graham?'

'We'll hope so,' I replied.

'Then jest yourself, my boy.'

'Set me the example, and I will. I'm afraid I'm not a humorous subject. But, look here, Naylor,' I could not refrain from adding, most conventionally, 'if anything should happen to me'——

For answer, he burst out laughing, and said: 'My dear fellow, none of that, for mercy's sake. It's played out. We're not going to die, either of us—any one of us, I mean, *mon cher*,' with a nod to De Blessant. 'It will be a little pistol practice—nothing more, on my honour.'

But the Frenchman sighed, and professed to disbelieve Naylor's sentiments.

'You do not know,' he said mournfully.

Now this sort of thing was not inspiriting, even if it was all mere imagination. It had its effect on me for one, and when we lay down to sleep, in a room full of warriors, I could do nothing but toss about until the cold dawn light slid stealthily upon us.

The morning made these weak anticipations seem as absurd as perhaps they were. With the sound of gay voices, I, too, found something like courage in me. The Sphakiot cocks crew in the village as valorously as the mountaineers, and the hissing sound of swords and knives getting their last touch of sharpness on the village grindstones was as enlivening as a tonic.

No time was lost. The summer heat-mist was still on the Mediterranean when Thyatis and the other leaders began to marshal their men into companies. We could not see the cruisers. But, as if specially to encourage us, just at this time the slim body of the famous insurrectionary blockade-runner, the *Panhellenion*, was noticed gliding close inshore towards the port of Sphakia. She had successfully made yet another of her many trips from Athens, past the stern fortress-prison of Grabusa, on Crete's north-western headland, and so round, under cover of the night, to the people who longed for her. The cheers that greeted the sight of her might almost have been heard on board.

'This night,' said Thyatis, with a proud uplifting of his chin, 'she shall carry great news to the continent.'

'Let's hope it,' responded De Blessant.

For a man who was prepared to be a corpse ere sunset, the Frenchman was singularly solicitous about the future. He expected letters by the patriotic boat, and was precise in his orders that they were to be brought up without delay, to be perused after the taking of the blockhouse.

Naylor, on the other hand, was in his old dare-devil mood. He went whistling to and fro, clapping the Sphakiot warriors on the shoulders, and airing his Greek phrases on them, with glorious carelessness whether they could be understood or not.

The parting with the womenkind was not without its notes of pathos. They are doughty souls in Sphakia, men and women alike; but this was a grave occasion. If the attack failed, it might mean the overrunning by Moslem troops, in their worst humour, of this part of the highlands. There were young brides in the village, as well as the mothers of many well-knit patriots. Poor souls! It was not to be wondered at if they had the glisten of tears in their eyes as they embraced their dear ones, and blessed them with the floridity of language that comes naturally to the southerner at such times.

The best touch of all was given by the blessing of our banners. An old priest with a white beard was led out (he was blind), and in the presence of us all he appealed to God and the saints on our behalf, with his palsied hands first on one flag and then on another. He had been through several insurrections, poor old fellow, and though enthusiasm still lingered in him, he was evidently not without his doubts.

We three were under Thyatis. Our banner was of blue silk, with the head of Leonidas worked on it, and the words 'Enough of servitude' for a device.

I confess it was not without a thrill that I heard our leader inquire: 'You will desire to be in front, gentlemen?' and Naylor's assurance that that was precisely what we wished most.

But, after all, what did it matter, methought? I tried, with fair success, to play the fatalist. If I was destined to end my life in the mountains of Crete, and leave the firm of Renton and Graham without its junior partner on such and such a day, of what use to wriggle meanly against the iron hand of the inevitable? And so I gripped my revolver and squared my shoulders, and smiled as if we were bound on a mere picnic excursion.

'We're in for it now, old chap,' said Naylor, with a chuckle. 'Shoot straight when the time comes.'

'Right, Naylor,' I replied, though still resolved, if I shot at all, it should be as crookedly as possible. I had acted the fool ere this in life: the other day at Khalepa, perhaps, for example: why not once more?

And so the start was made, and soon we lost sight of the houses beneath us, and the rigid forms of the sad-hearted women and helpless veterans who watched us go.

The blockhouse was some two or three miles from the village. Awful miles! indescribable miles! I was prepared to have my heart brought towards my throat by Moslem muskets, but not to be frightened by rocks and precipices. Yet these last were perfectly appalling. We had to crawl along the edges of some in single file, with the subdued roar of water a thousand and more feet below, clamouring for us if we slipped. And we had also to get up the face of rock-walls that I would never have touched but for this desperate game of 'follow the leader.'

For two hours this sort of thing lasted. Then came a quiet halt and collection of forces. There was much mopping of brows and a certain amount of drinking—very necessary under the circumstances. The sun blazed on us from over the shoulder of one of the highest peaks of the Madara Vouna close by, with a great patch of snow in a dimple on its side. But it was no time to think of nature's grandeur, for barely half a mile away was the straight line of the roof of the blockhouse. More than that of it was at present invisible.

'We're in luck, my friends,' De Blessant confided to us after some words with the chiefs. 'It was expected to find certain of the "accursed ones" exercising outside. We shall perhaps now take them better unprepared.'

The last words of instruction were given, and then our army of nearly a thousand fighting men (less one, myself) was divided into three bodies. We remained with the central contingent. The other two made flank movements. I thought it rather comforting not to lose sight of the fine blue banner with the head on it. I thought also (odd how one does think of immaterial concerns at critical moments) that it was a pity the artist had not studied the real human head a little before attempting a Leonidas on silk.

The irrepressible Naylor must needs get to work with his pen during this half-hour or so. The Sphakiots looked aslant at him across their great noses, and evidently wondered at his scholarship and his choosing such a time for the display of it. But Naylor remained unperturbed, nor could De Blessant's remarks and mine distract him, either.

'There!' he exclaimed, when he had done. 'If the worst happens, you can tell them at home I died writing. A bit of a fraud, perhaps; but literature itself is a pretty warm battle, I do assure you.'

The order to proceed was given. We laughed at Naylor, and obeyed it.

Our course was by the base of the cone of the high peak already mentioned. We had to descend a little and then pick our way across a small rugged upland basin of rocks and herbs. This brought us to the corresponding gentle acclivity on the other side. The blockhouse was set with its back to the rocks a little above and beyond—unseen, though so near, but felt by me, if by no one else.

I shall never forget the exciting moments of our final scramble upwards to the level of the fortress. Every instant I looked for a line of red-coats to pop up on the ridge and bowl us over like ninepins. We three were in the van. This was bad enough for me merely as a mountaineer, since the men behind were infinitely more expert climbers, and gave me no mercy. The idea of the easy target practice we should offer was worse.

Thyatis now regulated our every movement scrupulously. He was the first to get his head over the ridge; his bared head and nothing more.

Then, by twos and threes, he brought up his men and set them recumbent on the ground, with their guns levelled. We were well up the slope, and so had the better view of what was being designed. And the blockhouse was scarcely thirty paces away, and sufficiently beneath us to be covered by our men in an extraordinarily simple way. It seemed to me that Turkish heedlessness in a campaign could nohow have been better illustrated.

Red-coats were moving to and fro in the restricted courtyard of the building, with washing and cooking materials. A bugler began to stretch his lungs. The sunshine gleamed on the barred windows, and a breeze shook the crescented flag that capped this most bleak of abodes. Beyond, however, was the plain of Canea, with its gardens and villages, the dun-coloured capital itself, and the Mediterranean. It was a sublime perch. The cloudless blue heavens seemed almost to press upon our backs.

I made these observations as methodically as if I were a recognised non-combatant. But I was not allowed to continue so calm an occupation. Our left flank body began to show below, creeping towards the strong gate of the blockhouse.

'Get ready,' whispered Naylor. 'They're bound to spot them.'

It was even so. The blockhouse seethed with hubbub, and the courtyard was crowded with men running about to arm themselves. Then Thyatis gave the word to fire, and our men poured a terrible volley right into the thick of the Turks. I counted eleven motionless Moslems as the result.

This was the beginning. It seemed to me that we had the foe at a ghastly disadvantage; at any rate, if they were obliged to use the courtyard.

But a different tale had now to be told. From the windows and loopholes on the side that faced our flank body, a hot fire was soon being turned on the patriots. Before these could get near the walls, they had lost a number of men. Cover there was none for them, and the Moslem marksmanship made Thyatis groan and wrestle with his moustaches.

Worse followed. While our leader was anxiously looking for the appearance of our third body, I was engrossed by the movements of four huge Sphakiots from the attacking party. These, between them, carried two great sacks of gunpowder. They were protected as much as possible by their comrades. But the latter fell so fast that there was no guessing if they would ever reach their bourne, much less be allowed to place their charge conveniently in position and fire it.

Rockets were being sent up from the blockhouse even while this critical movement was in progress. Thyatis apparently liked the look of the rockets as little as the rest of the enemy's proceedings.

Word at this stage was loudly given to us to fire and advance; as a distraction, I presumed, since there was nothing very obvious for us to attack. A volley rang out against the windows and loop-holes, wherever a glint of red showed itself. The Sphakiots can shout, and they did shout. And, under the stimulating contagion, Naylor and I joined in with the ghost of a British cheer.

A roar of noise checked us—responsive and antagonistic shouts—and, after a prodigious explosion, a dense cloud of smoke rose from the spot where I had last seen the brave fellows with the powder. The fatal calamity had happened, as it seemed bound to do. The blockhouse was not destined to fall into our hands, unless we made ladders of each other, and could force our way over the walls.

'By Jove!' cried Naylor, 'that looks bad.'

We had all brought up close under the blockhouse, which here seemed as unassailable as Newgate. A rocket-stick dropped oddly between De Blessant and me. It made us laugh, though, Heaven knows, our situation was not an amusing one. There were dead Sphakiots on the slope down which we had come, and dozens of dead and wounded on the left side of the building.

An order to join our forces with these others was obeyed pell-mell. But of what use was it? There we were before a massive, iron-banded door that only a battering-ram or a piece of ordnance could have smashed.

A conviction of mismanagement and failure was upon me. It seemed to be reflected in the stern, angry faces of the patriots.

But an instant later I lost all particular interest in the siege and the Moslems' resistance to it. Naylor slanted backwards, and his right hand started to his breast.

'I've got it,' he stammered, as he fell.

De Blessant and I gave him all our attention. There seemed little else for us to do, which, from one aspect, was comforting enough. Between us we carried him under the wall of the blockhouse in the direction whence our other detachment might be expected to come. There was no doctor with the patriots in their death-or-glory enterprise. But the Frenchman said he knew a little about wounds and their treatment.

Ere we could do more, however, than lay the poor fellow on the ground, we were joined by several of the mountaineers, with the word 'Betrayed!' on their lips.

A body of Turkish soldiers was making its appearance from below. The rockets were hurrying them forward.

The thought of leaving Naylor was not to be entertained. Nor was it entertained. The mountaineers made slings of their gun-straps, and four of them took the poor fellow between them, and started at a great pace down a ravine that sprang from the eastern side of the blockhouse. Our movements were briskened painfully by the singing of bullets about our ears, as for a time (brief, yet terrible) we again got in range of the Moslem muskets.

Then for hours, as it seemed, we did nothing but speed for our lives, reckless of precipices and aught else, except an increase of the distance between us and the victorious red-coats.

Naylor was alive, and smiled whenever we spoke to him. This sufficed to keep us from halting. He signified, moreover, that we were on no account to stop for him. But it was a miserable business. I had never felt such a coward as I felt during this headlong flight.

GOLD-MINERS IN THE PAST.

SOME EXPERIENCES IN CALIFORNIA.

Now that the attention of the entire world has been attracted to gold-mining by the magnitude of the outputs from South Africa and West Australia, perhaps a few of the experiences of a gold-seeker may not prove uninteresting. But I am not a miner of the present day: it is nearly half a century since I first set foot in California, and there is a vast difference between the way in which the precious metal is now extracted, and the primitive methods which were considered perfect in my time. The miner of fifty years ago never dreamt of machinery, costly and magnificent, capable of crushing thousands of tons of quartz per week. He 'dollied,' or ground, his little bits of rock by means of a contrivance resembling a pestle and mortar, and it was only the very richest stone that repaid him for this labour. In fact, there was very little crushing in those days, quartz not being easily found sufficiently rich to make such work a paying concern, and it was therefore alluvial gold which was chiefly sought for. The gold-seeker having decided on the place where he was to make his first venture, provided himself with a shovel and pick and started for the 'diggings.' Gold-mining was then carried on all over California, and he had his choice of many camps.

But what a wild and lawless place was California in those days! Here in these gold-fields were gathered together thousands of the greatest desperadoes that the earth could boast of, and thousands of needy, if harmless, adventurers from every country in the world. Fortunately with them were mixed thousands of honest hard-working men, of every condition in life, from the peer to the peasant, men who had been doing well, or fairly well, at their professions, or in their business offices at home, but for whom the attractions of this El Dorado had proved too powerful. Law of the land there was none, but 'Judge Lynch' dispensed what was known as Justice, instead. His jurisdiction was certainly very summary, and he was far too inclined to convict on the slightest evidence; but I must say that without him no man would have been able to retain the fruits of his labour, or even to call his life his own. And yet, even as it was, human life was of very little account. Men went about armed to the teeth, and the slightest provocation was considered an excuse for drawing knives or pistols on each other. In this way hardly a week passed without the occurrence of some horrible tragedies. We would call the majority of the affairs murders, but Lynch law took a more lenient view; and provided there were witnesses to prove that there had been at least some kind of a quarrel, the assassin invariably got off.

But to do 'Judge Lynch' justice, I must acknowledge that he was stern enough when anything like a cold-blooded murder was brought under his notice. In fact, in cases of premeditated murder, public opinion frequently ran so strongly against the accused, that the greatest difficulty was experienced in securing him anything like a fair trial. On purely circumstantial evidence—sometimes of the weakest description—hundreds of men were hanged, many of whom were undoubtedly innocent. One of these trials in particular made a very vivid impression on me.

A claim not far from ours was owned by three very curiously assorted partners—namely, the son of an English nobleman, a German ex-waiter, and a discharged—or escaped—convict. The claim turned out very well, and after some months' labour they were able to divide a very large sum between them. The Hon. Mr Blank immediately took himself off to San Francisco for a few weeks' holiday; the other two remained at their work. A few mornings after the departure of Mr Blank, the waiter was found dead in his tent, with a black mark on his throat, and a face which presented every appearance of death from strangulation. The only other occupant of the tent was his partner, the late convict, who was known to be a man of bad character, and with whom the deceased was not on very friendly terms. Suspicion of foul play at once fell on the convict, especially as the waiter's gold was nowhere to be found, and he was arrested on the capital charge. It did not take them very long to settle matters of this kind out there. A court consisting of a president—or Judge Lynch—and a jury were quickly elected and sworn. The 'court' having heard some unimportant evidence, which simply proved that deceased was intoxicated when he went home, entered the tent where the body was lying, and viewed it. When they came out, the 'judge' announced that they were satisfied that the man had been murdered, and also that the prisoner was the only person who could have committed the crime. Still, before hanging him, it would be a great satisfaction if they could have some medical evidence, for—though most improbable—there was nevertheless a slight chance that the cause of death was other than that which they suspected. He then asked if any miner in the camp belonged to the medical profession. Now it happened that though there were four or five hundred men on this gold-field, there was not a doctor among them, and the question was therefore answered in the negative. He was then about to give the order for the prisoner's execution, when some miners near him made some remarks which I did not catch. Presently I heard my name mentioned, and immediately afterwards the 'judge' addressed me, saying: 'I am told, Mr X., that you are a doctor.'

I assured him he was misinformed, and that

I knew nothing whatever about the medical profession. Upon this several miners declared they once heard me say that I had 'studied medicine.' I replied that what they heard me say was, that I had been intended for the medical profession, but that just as I had commenced to study, the gold fever seized me, and I ran away to the diggings.

I solemnly affirmed that there was not a man on the field knew less on the subject than I did, and made several energetic but perfectly useless protests against his order. The crowd of miners, however, became quite threatening in their demeanour towards me, declaring that I was only trying to shirk the job, and that it was my duty to assist them in the administration of justice. Seeing that it was useless to contend against such opposition, I proceeded to the tent, not quite certain whether I stood on my head or my heels. Nor was this feeling lessened when I heard the order given to supply me with some sharp knives. But the most serious part of the matter was the consideration that the unfortunate prisoner's life was now practically placed in my hands, and that I was utterly incompetent to give the decision on which rested his only chance. I certainly could not swear falsely, nor had I any desire that my evidence should cause a miscarriage of justice; but, on the other hand, the deceased *might* have died of heart disease or of some such complaint. And how was I, without the slightest knowledge of anatomy or medicine, to ascertain the fact?

In this dilemma I entered the tent and looked at the body. It was lying on its back; the face appeared much swollen and distorted, and the shirt being open, the black mark on the throat was distinctly revealed. The moment I saw this mark, I felt more helpless than ever. I had expected to see a number of black spots about the windpipe, and probably some abrasions of the skin—such marks as a man's fingers, tightly compressed, would be likely to make; but what was before me was entirely different. It was a straight black line about half an inch deep, and ran right across the throat from ear to ear. I saw at once that it was most unlikely such a mark could be caused by a man's hand, and then an idea suddenly occurred to me. I had been informed that when the body was first found, the shirt was buttoned at the throat. I now tried to button it again, but found it was almost impossible to do so. The fact was, the collar was much too small, and no doubt, when the man lay down to sleep—intoxicated as he was—his neck had swelled, and he was consequently suffocated. I looked at the band of the shirt, and saw that it corresponded exactly with the black line which stretched across the throat. Much relieved by this discovery, I was quickly giving my evidence before Judge Lynch and his court. There was not a little excitement when I announced that I had found, by superficial examination, that deceased had died from a natural cause. Some of the jurors were at first incredulous; but when I took them to the tent and explained matters, they admitted that my theory was undoubtedly correct. The ex-convict had certainly a very narrow escape, and as for myself, I was known as 'the doctor' from that day forward. The missing gold was also satisfactorily accounted for, for when Mr Blank got back, he proved that the dead man had given it to him to bank in San Francisco.

Another very curious trial was for robbery only; but the punishment on conviction was the same as for murder. Indeed, my experience taught me that, of the two, the miners were, if anything, most severe on the former offence.

A miner, whom we will call Brown, reported one morning that a bag of gold-dust, which he had buried at the foot of a certain tree immediately outside the camp, had been stolen during the night. Brown declared that when he had passed by the place at a late hour the previous evening, the ground was undisturbed. He passed the spot again in the morning on his way to work, and then noticed that it had been freshly dug, and that his treasure was gone. An affair like this became everybody's business at once; so a party of miners went to look at the spot. When they returned they announced that they had a clew. It appears it had rained during the night, and the ground about the place was consequently muddy and impressionable. On this soft clay they were able to distinctly trace some footsteps, and according to these impressions, a small triangular piece of leather must have been upon the sole of the left boot. Now the question was, who owned such a boot? The patch was such a very peculiar one, that it was hardly possible that a second of the kind existed. The miners were all called together, and a committee having been appointed, every man turned up the soles of his boots for inspection. The triangular patch not, however, appearing on any of them, the committee was requested to proceed from tent to tent to examine the spare boots of each miner. This was a work which occupied a good deal of time, and aroused much interest, a crowd accompanying the committee. At last, amidst great excitement, the members of the committee emerged from a tent with a pair of boots, which corresponded, to all appearance, with those they were in search of. Accompanied by the entire camp, they proceeded to the spot where the robbery had taken place, and there a careful comparison of the soles with the impressions was made. The length and breadth of the boots corresponded exactly with the footprints; and what was still more important, the dimensions of the triangular patch were found to be identical in every particular with the impressions made on the mud. The examination established beyond doubt that these were the boots worn by the robber. The owner of the boots—a miner whom we will call Jones—was about the only respectable man in the whole camp, and certainly the last upon whom suspicion of being concerned in such a case as this would be likely to fall. His good character, however, was powerless to shield him under the circumstances, and half an hour afterwards he was being tried for his life.

Brown swore that he had seen the prisoner loitering near the spot where the gold was hidden, a couple of days before the robbery. Several witnesses also deposed to having seen Jones passing through the camp to his tent, considerably after midnight on the night of the robbery. The accused admitted this, but explained that he had been 'up country' all day prospecting, and was unable to get back earlier. He also admitted that he wore the boots in question on the day of the theft. Asked whether they could have been abstracted from his tent and replaced while he slept, he said he did not believe it could possibly be done, he was such a very light sleeper.

This was the substance of the case against the prisoner. The 'judge' told the jury that he considered the weight of evidence was against the accused, and the jury endorsed his opinion by returning a verdict of guilty. Poor Jones was accordingly sentenced to be hanged, his execution to take place in an hour. There was a large tree just outside the camp, known as 'the gallows tree,' and here the final scene was generally enacted. The method of hanging was certainly primitive, but it had the merit of simplicity. A rope was thrown over a stout bough, and the end with the noose adjusted around the condemned man's neck. The other end was then seized by a number of miners, who pulled until they hoisted him some feet from the ground. They then tied the rope, and the body remained swinging until next day.

When the hour had expired, Jones was taken to 'the gallows tree,' the great body of the miners accompanying him. While the rope was being arranged, my attention became fixed upon a tall thin Yankee, who held in his hands the incriminating pair of boots. This individual was leaning lazily against a tree, apparently absorbed in deep thought, and chewing with evident relish a piece of tobacco. As the preparations approached completion, he appeared to wake up, and suddenly startled us by drawling out, 'I say, Jidge.'

Several miners, as well as the judge, gave a glance in his direction, but no further notice was taken, and he relapsed again into his sleepy condition. A few minutes later, the noise of the rope being thrown across the bough again aroused him, and once more we heard 'I say, Jidge.'

These interruptions were evidently considered unseemly by the crowd, but the Yankee apparently thought that he had something worth saying, for after another few moments spent in meditation, he again bawled: 'I say, Jidge, I guess you've got the wrong man.'

Having delivered himself of this speech, he looked as if he had acquitted himself remarkably well, complacently shifted his tobacco from one cheek to the other, and prepared to enjoy another doze.

But Mr Justice Lynch had been irritated by his interruptions and remarks, and now sharply demanded what he meant by such behaviour.

'Just this, Jidge: I reckon you've got the wrong man.'

'Confound you and your reckoning; why do you say that?'

For answer the Yankee held up the boots, and then his nasal twang was heard: ''Cause, Jidge, the patch is on the *right* foot.'

For a moment the significance of the remark was not fully comprehended; then a light dawned on the crowd, and the scene that followed was an animated one. Judge, jury, and spectators all struggled with each other for a look at the boots. The Yankee's statement was quickly proved to be quite correct—the triangular patch was indeed on the right boot. It will be remembered that, according to the impressions, this patch should have been on the *left* boot, and strange though it may seem, this important difference was overlooked when the otherwise careful comparison was made.

Of course the discovery proved Jones's innocence; but it was a 'close shave,' and the incident, with that previously related, goes to show that many innocent persons must have suffered in those days when Judge Lynch held sway.

Though there were many very successful miners on the Californian gold-fields, I would be inclined to say that, on the whole, the men who did best were the storekeepers. These charged enormous prices for everything, but then they had to bring their goods long distances—sometimes hundreds of miles—through a difficult country, and contend with every species of transport disability. They had also to frequently give considerable credit, and as may easily be imagined, made plenty of bad debts. Under these circumstances, such charges as I have seen—as, for instance, ten shillings for a head of cabbage—were not perhaps so very extraordinary. Until the Chinese came to the diggings, every man had to be his own servant. There was no such thing as getting any kind of menial work performed except on payment of prohibitive wages. In fact, it was known that—expensive as every kind of clothing material was—it was cheaper to buy a new shirt than to get the soiled one washed. The advent of the Chinese, however, changed all this. When they arrived they were generally penniless, but they were willing to do any kind of work, and through industry and an enviable capability of living on next to nothing, they soon saved money. As soon as this desirable result was attained, a dozen or so of them would club together to buy a claim, and such was their perseverance and energy, that they invariably did well.

Notwithstanding that they were so very useful, they received much bad treatment from their white neighbours. I have constantly seen them taken by the pigtail and brutally kicked upon the slightest provocation. They hardly ever resented these assaults, being either too cowardly, or feeling themselves physically unable to cope with the white man. But if they were no match for the European or American in one way, they were more than his equal in another, and he might be put down as clever who could 'best' a Chinaman. I remember an incident in this connection which may be worth relating.

A man named Jackson and his partners were working a claim near ours, for a long time without any success. They had resolved to give it up and try elsewhere, when it occurred to them that they might succeed in 'pawning it off' on a gang of simple-looking Chinese, who had just arrived from a neighbouring camp, and who were looking out for a claim to buy. Accordingly they induced some fellow-miners to make them a 'bogus' offer for it in the presence of the Chinamen, which offer they declined. The Celestials were soon seen consulting together, and they apparently came to the conclusion that they could not make any great mistake by improving a little on the white man's offer. So their spokesman presently advanced to Jackson's mine, and shaking his fat body from side to side, asked: 'Willee sellee claim?'

'No,' was the answer, gruffly given.

The Chinaman returned to his companions, but after a few minutes' talk with them, went back to Jackson's, and again we heard: 'Willee sellee claim?'

'No, I tell you: be off out of that.'

The heathen, however, did not stir. He has unlimited faith in the power of money, and does not believe there is anything in the world which may not be bought, if only the proper price is bid. Instead of going away, therefore, he offered to purchase, for a sum which was a considerable advance on the 'bogus' bid, and after some further bargaining, bought the worthless claim for about five hundred dollars.

Next morning the Chinamen were early at work on their newly acquired holding. No doubt they quickly discovered that they had been 'sold,' but being of a persevering disposition, they toiled away hopefully for several days. At the end of a week their untiring industry received an unexpected reward, and the news went through the camp like wildfire that the Celestials 'had struck it rich' in Jackson's claim. The story turned out to be well founded. Some miners hearing that the Chinamen were getting good 'pans,' had gone over to their claim, and were astonished at the richness of some 'pannings' made in their presence. The good-luck of the Chinese increased next day, when quite a number of tidy nuggets were unearthed. But it reached a climax on the following morning when—several whites being present—one of the Chinamen brought out on the point of his pick a lump of pure gold which was found to weigh twenty-seven ounces. No such 'find' had been made in the camp for a considerable time, and it caused quite a stir. The Chinese were very visibly excited, and became most reticent and jealous of supervision, while Jackson and his friends were unmercifully 'chaffed' on all sides. It was another case of 'the biter bitten,' and for the biter there is rarely ever any sympathy. But a number of the principal miners put their heads together and came to the conclusion that it would be a shame to leave such a good thing to the 'heathens.' Accordingly a syndicate was formed, and negotiations opened for the re-purchase of the claim. The Chinese would not at first hear of selling, but were finally bullied into giving a reluctant consent. By the terms of agreement they were to get five thousand dollars and be allowed to continue working until dark that night. Needless to say they did not give up possession while there was a ray of light. When work was no longer possible they handed over the mine and were paid the sum agreed upon. Early next morning the syndicate—of whom Jackson was a prominent member—commenced operations, but were astonished to find that their 'pannings' were quite barren. They tried all parts of the mine, but only with the same result—not a particle of gold. It presently became known that the Chinese vendors had disappeared during the night, and then it began to dawn upon the unlucky investors that the simple-looking 'heathens' had been a trifle too clever for them. Some very strong language was used, and I am afraid that, if the Celestials could have been laid hold of, they would have had a very unpleasant experience. Fortunately for them, they were many miles away, and in some unknown direction. Their stratagem was very simple, and it was admirably carried out. Finding that they had been duped, they determined to try to sell back the claim again—if possible at a profit. With this intention they hid their nuggets (they had previously done well at another camp) in the clay, and also shook some handfuls of gold dust through it. Then nothing remained but to bring all this auriferous matter to light again, which they took care to do in the presence of some of their white neighbours, and we know the result.

If gold-miners are occasionally fortunate beyond their wildest dreams, they meet also with many great disappointments. My last venture in California partook of this latter nature.

Accompanied by three companions, I left the camp and started on a 'prospecting' tour. We travelled for about two hundred miles through a wild and almost uninhabited country, until we reached a rather large river. The 'pannings' we here made were so good that we came to the conclusion that, if we turned the river from its course, its bed would prove rich enough to reward us for our labour. We set to work, but it took us fully four months to effect this object. At last, however, we had the satisfaction of knowing that our expectations were fully realised, for the first pannings we made were extremely rich. Everything pointed to the probability of our having a most successful season, when one night after some heavy rains up country, a huge flood swept down the river, bursting through our dam, and carrying all before it. This was a terrible misfortune, for not only had we our four months' work for nothing, but all our implements were lost, and we found ourselves two hundred miles from camp without a pick or a shovel. Of course there was nothing for it but to retrace our steps, and after such a bitter disappointment we never had the heart to return to that river.

SALTA AND JUJUY—JABEZ LAND.

A good deal has been heard about Salta in connection with Jabez Balfour, and now that he is once more in England owing to circumstances over which he had no control, it may be as well to say a few words about that city before it fades from the public mind and relapses into its usual state of semi-oblivion.

It was founded long ago by the Spaniards, who came down from Peru, and is one of the oldest towns in the Argentine Republic. Even now it retains far more evidences of those old Spanish days than most of the other Argentine cities—perhaps largely due to the fact that only within the last three or four years has it been connected by railway with the outer world. Formerly, travelling was attended by real peril and difficulty; but as these regions are now opening up, they will probably receive the attention they deserve.

Any one inquiring in Buenos Ayres as to what sort of provinces Jujuy and Salta may be, will be invariably horrified by tales of waterless *caches*, deserts, and fever-haunted swamps, where malaria and mosquitoes render existence, to say the least of it, undesirable. In point of fact, these two provinces are not only really healthy, but are full of natural wealth, and abound in beautiful panoramas. Salta itself lies in a valley, surrounded by picturesque hills; fifty miles to the west, the snowy Cordillera rise like a wall into the blue, and form a picture of comparative grandeur. Looking down on the town from any of the surrounding slopes, one sees a city more Eastern than American in character, the white houses, the shining cupolas of its old churches, only half emerging from masses of luxuriant foliage.

In the valleys around Salta, lying away among the ranges of the mountains which rise up to the far-off Andes, are the vineyards and wine-making villages which, with a few cattle or sugar estates, bring the greater part of the revenue to the provincial treasury. And on the tops of the hills, and hidden away in almost inaccessible ravines, are to be found a population belonging, not to the Argentine, but to a far older world. Many years ago, numbers of Bolivian and Peruvian peasantry were brought from the north, and settled in these wildernesses, where, to this day, they pasture their herds on as many leagues of country almost as they desire. So little connection have they with the outer world, that very few can speak Spanish without difficulty; they are of old Indian descent, and their tongue is Quichua, the language of the old Inca empire.

Jujuy, farther north than Salta, and on the Bolivian frontier, is a more uncivilised province. Here the one or two sugar factories which represent industry place less reliance on Christian than Indian labour for the fields. From the forests of the Gran Chaco, far away in the east, come down every year tribes of red shaggy Matacos, tattooed, and almost naked, armed to the teeth with bows and arrows, old muskets and blunderbusses of great danger to the possessors. For a couple of months they are on the march in single file, the warriors in front, to guard against surprise by a hostile tribe, and then the women, with the babies and household wares packed indiscriminately on their backs. They come down ostensibly to work—really, to get fat on sugar-cane, of which they consume immense quantities, and depart when the crop is over. On the estates, they live in villages of grass huts, well away from each other, for the different tribes on a plantation are almost always at feud with each other, and collision between two hostile bands is an ugly affair, and productive of bloodshed. The Mataco is, in fact, a very wild type, little above the brute creation.

A far more advanced type of Indian is the Chiriguano, who comes down from Bolivia to earn mares and clothes and go home rich. All the year round bands of these men are coming and going to and fro from the north across some five hundred miles of country. They have a melodious language, are cleanly, and are some of them Christians. A curious feature about them is that they all wear buttons in their chins; their hair, long and black, is bound in masses round their heads. They come in bands of from six to sixty, under a captain—usually the deputy of some big chief up above. There are two or three big Chiriguano chiefs in the Bolivian Chaco who have supreme power over as many as three or four thousand men. They hold their own courts of justice in their own towns, wage wars with their neighbours or the Bolivian Government, and counteract the influence of the Jesuit mission among them. On the whole, the Chiriguano is a desirable labourer, is cheerful and good-humoured, clean and thrifty. A little drink, however, arouses the Indian instinct here too, and fearful fights with knives occur when there is liquor about.

It may be well to add a word as to the natural resources of these provinces. In Jujuy especially the country is almost entirely covered by virgin forests, clothing hill and valley in all directions with dense vegetation. Small palms, cedar, and hard woods abound; the timber supply, indeed, is magnificent. Tobacco, rice, sugar, maize, tea, and a little coffee are the chief objects of cultivation; but the population is small, owing to the lack of water and difficulty of communication with any market. Only a small part of the province is opened up. Minerals are said to be plentiful, and there are considerable deposits of petroleum. The climate is by no means unhealthy; the soil is extremely rich; and as the country advances it will probably be found that these districts are as worthy attention as any of the provinces of the River Plate.

SONNET—FOR A PICTURE.

Well pleased am I, fair damsel, to have seen
  This sweet resemblance of thy flawless face;
  Thy snowy shoulders' rarest maiden grace;
That flower-crowned brow, where kissing fringes lean;
Those tender eyes, beyond all else serene;
  Those hallowed lips, where passion leaves no trace;
  That dainty neck, where tresses interlace;
And white-robed bust, as of a virgin queen.
When strife shall my tranquillity impair,
  And poignant sorrows fill my heart with pain,
Let me behold thy face, so sweet and fair,
  That, as I gaze into those eyes again,
  I may some inward quietude attain,
Caught from the deep soul-calm depicted there.

Sam Wood.

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UNDERGROUND LONDON.

The commercial prosperity of large cities depends so much upon the facilities afforded to their inhabitants for rapid and convenient travelling, that such an important and novel undertaking as the construction of the Central London Electrical Railway must naturally be regarded more as a public benefit than as a private enterprise.

When we remember that at the beginning of the present century the stage-coach was considered not only a luxurious but even a speedy mode of travelling, the opportunities of which we are now able to avail ourselves are so numerous, that we are lost in admiration at what has been accomplished in recent years for our welfare and comfort. Carriages, cabs, and omnibuses are now to be found everywhere, and horseless carriages (see *Chambers's Journal*, No. 610, Sept. 7, 1895, and page 683 below) threaten to give a new aspect to road traffic, already diversified by the ubiquitous bicycle. And our islands are covered with a network of railways, the construction and maintenance of which are alone able to give continual employment to a vast number of people.

The principal object of the new underground line which is about to be made, is to provide a means of travelling which the Metropolitan and Metropolitan District Railways are unable to offer, since these, while encircling the busiest portion of London, leave the general traffic along the main thoroughfares to be dealt with by the omnibus and tramway companies. Recognising the importance of travelling in a straight rather than in a circuitous route, the promoters of the Central London Railway have naturally decided to adhere to this principle wherever possible; and thus commencing at Shepherd's Bush, at the extreme west of London, their line runs nearly due east, passing under the Uxbridge Road, Oxford Street, Holborn, and Cheapside to the Bank of England.

There being no railway in this country along a route so crowded as that between the Marble Arch and the Bank, it is almost impossible to estimate the number of people that will be likely to avail themselves of the great convenience offered by this line; but the development of passenger traffic on the Metropolitan Railway during the last thirty years would seem to indicate that at least sixty million people will use the new railway annually.

The first attempt to construct underground railways was made in London in 1853, when Parliament sanctioned a scheme to construct a line from the Edgeware Road to King's Cross, a distance of two and a quarter miles, and from this small commencement grew the two lines now known as the Metropolitan and Metropolitan District. It was at first intended that these lines should be confined exclusively to a local business, much in the same way as the elevated railways of New York—that is, without direct communication with other lines. This arrangement, however, did not prove to be very profitable, and it was then sought to obtain additional revenue by making connections with various main lines for the interchange of passengers, and to enable these railways to run their trains into the central portions of the City, while at the same time the new company, by making various extensions, began to develop a suburban business.

The construction of all these early underground lines is similar in principle, although subject to considerable variations, necessitated by the different localities through which they pass. They are worked by steam locomotives which discharge the products of combustion directly into the tunnel, and no method of artificial ventilation is attempted. The evil consequences attending this system are minimised as much as possible by burning the best quality of coal, which is practically free from sulphur, and which makes but little smoke. The engines employed upon these railways are of a condensing type, so that the steam, instead of being exhausted through the chimney, as in the case of an ordinary locomotive, is conveyed into a water-tank and condensed, by which means the air in the tunnels is kept drier, and is therefore less disagreeable than it would be were this precaution not adopted.

The cost of making a double line of railway of this kind may be assumed generally to be about a quarter of a million pounds per mile; but where great difficulties are experienced, such as were met with on the portion under Cannon Street and the immediate neighbourhood, where the work had to be carried on below one of the busiest thoroughfares in London, the cost per mile amounted to four hundred thousand pounds; and it is probable that, when all other expenses are included, the cost for such a portion as that would not be much less than one million pounds.

It is unfortunate that the earnings of these two companies cannot be regarded as entirely satisfactory. The immense capital required to construct such railways, and the low fares they are obliged to charge owing to the keen competition with which they have to contend, are the two principal reasons why the profits appear comparatively small; and although such a state of affairs is to be regretted, it does not necessarily indicate that underground railways generally are unremunerative.

The City and South London Railway, which, commencing at the Monument and passing under the Thames, terminates at Stockwell, is one of the most interesting lines that has been recently constructed. This railway, which was opened to the public only in 1890, consists of two cast-iron tubular tunnels, generally placed side by side at a depth varying between forty and eighty feet beneath the surface of the streets. These were built by means of the 'Greathead shield,' a method of construction now being so successfully employed at the tunnel which the London County Council are making under the Thames at Blackwall, and one which it is also proposed to adopt for carrying out the work in connection with the Central London Railway.

Between the Monument and Stockwell there are only four stations, and these being generally some fifty feet below the ground, hydraulic lifts are provided for the convenience of the passengers using the line; the cost of working these lifts is, however, considerable, amounting to about five per cent. of the earnings of the company.

A uniform fare of twopence is charged for any distance, and there being but one class, no tickets are issued, the payment being made on passing through the turnstiles on entering the stations. During last year nearly seven million people travelled by this railway, and the financial prospects of the company are now considerably brighter than during the early days of its existence. Ventilation is secured automatically by the piston action of the trains, each train propelling in front of it a column of air, which ultimately finds its way to the streets through the shafts provided for the stairs and lifts: meanwhile the train draws down a supply of fresh air through the similar openings behind it.

As electrical locomotion is adopted, the air in the tunnels is comparatively fresh, the carbonic acid gas exhaled by the passengers being the chief source of vitiation; but although in this respect it is considerably better than at various places on other underground railways, it will be generally admitted that the quality of the atmosphere is even yet susceptible of further improvement. This railway has received both the warmest commendation and the most stringent criticism. It offers to the public a direct route to many places on the south side of the Thames, and does not suffocate it during the journey; but at the same time the inconvenience of small carriages, and several other minor defects, are very apparent. It must be remembered, however, that the company experienced considerable difficulties in making the line at a reasonable cost; and when the work was undertaken, one of the objects was to demonstrate the feasibility of this method of construction, but as financial resources were limited, the smallest practical tunnel was adopted in order to reduce the expense as much as possible.

Any carriage that can be run in a tube which is only a trifle over ten feet in diameter cannot easily be made very comfortable, while its restricted dimensions are also responsible for the air in the tunnel not always remaining as fresh as it might be. In all future railways that will be built of this type, these drawbacks will no doubt be either wholly obviated, or at least much reduced, by making the tunnels of considerably larger diameter, thus allowing both the volume of air and the size of the carriages to be increased.

As will be readily understood, the electrical locomotion on this line is of a very interesting character. The engines, which weigh from ten to fourteen tons, are capable of hauling trains consisting of three carriages, each thirty-two feet long, and of sufficient size to contain thirty-two passengers. The average speed from terminus to terminus, including stoppages, is eleven miles per hour, or, excluding these stoppages, thirteen miles per hour. Between the stations, however, from twenty to twenty-five miles per hour is attained.

The quality of the air in any underground railway is necessarily of paramount importance, and a careful study of the various systems of ventilation that could be adopted is naturally one of the first considerations with those responsible for their construction. Since the quantity of carbonic acid gas exhaled by a human being in one hour scarcely exceeds half a cubic foot, while that produced by an ordinary locomotive in the same time is fifty thousand cubic feet, we are able to appreciate that steam-engines for such railways are inadmissible, as one engine will destroy as much air as one hundred thousand people. By the employment of electrical instead of steam locomotion, however, nearly the whole cause for a vitiated atmosphere is at once removed.

The Central London Railway, which it is estimated will cost nearly three million pounds, and which will be some six and a half miles in length, will consist of two tunnels, each eleven and a half feet in diameter, placed close together some fifty to eighty feet below the surface of the ground. There will be altogether fourteen stations, that at the Bank of England (the site for which is beneath the open space in front of the Royal Exchange), forming one of the features of the railway. Here the company undertake to construct, in addition to the station, several subways for foot-passengers, which will connect together the various streets terminating in the immediate vicinity, thus enabling people to pass under the road and escape the dangers attending the tremendous traffic above them. These subways will be at least fifteen feet wide, and being lined with white glazed bricks, and lighted at all hours with electric lamps, they will constitute an important public improvement, which it is astonishing has not been provided long ago.

Other subways will also be constructed for the reception of the ever-increasing number of gas and water pipes and electrical wires, and it is to be hoped that such being thus all collected together will prevent the interruption to traffic which is so often caused when they have either to be repaired or augmented.

The station itself will be at a much lower level than the subways, and four hydraulic lifts will be provided for passengers in addition to the usual stairways.

It is hardly necessary to say that here, as in the City and South London line, electrical locomotion will be used, and consequently we may rely on the atmosphere in the tunnels being comparatively pure, although it is not proposed to provide any artificial means of ventilation. The whole of the journey of six and a half miles will be accomplished in twenty-five minutes, while that from Oxford Circus to the Bank will be performed in ten minutes, a rate of speed some thirty per cent. higher than that attained on the Metropolitan Railway, and comparing very favourably with the omnibuses, which now take about three times as long to travel the same distance.

The construction of a work of this character will necessarily occupy considerable time, and although it has been estimated that only two years will be required for this purpose, the previous experience of large engineering undertakings indicates that it is probable a further length of time will be needed before the railway is available for passenger traffic. The nature of the work, however, admits of its being carried on simultaneously at various points along the route by sinking vertical shafts about a mile apart to the level of the line, and afterwards driving the tunnels from the bottom of these in both directions. By this method of construction very little interference would be caused with the traffic along the streets under which the railway passes, and only at the shafts would it be possible to discover that hundreds of men were busily at work, far below the surface of the ground, in forming the tunnels for the new line.

The space at our disposal will not permit us to deal with the many other interesting features of Underground London, although the new railway which is now being made from Waterloo to the central part of the City deserves more than a passing notice. This line, after running under the Thames, emerges near Blackfriars, and here passes beneath the present underground railway, which, it will be remembered, is itself just here below the London, Chatham, and Dover Line.

At the present time there are practically no difficulties which the engineer considers insurmountable, provided sufficient time and means are placed at his disposal. It is only, however, by the co-operation of hundreds and perhaps thousands of willing hands that these great achievements are successfully accomplished, and it must not be thought that such depend for their existence solely upon one individual, however capable he may be. Only by the combined efforts of all, from highest to lowest, are we able to carry out those great works which contribute so materially to our own comfort and national welfare.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XXVIII.—TEMPTER AND TEMPTRESS.

WHAT to do?

Paul Wynyan's constant question which he could not answer.

'I want your clear, calm judgment, old man,' he said to himself, as he adjured the memory of his old employer, for his brain was torn by conflicting emotions. Rage against Brant; bitterness for Rénée, who was not worthy of his love; desire to rehabilitate his character, and let her see that even if reviled, he was the honourable gentleman she might have loved.

But how to shape his actions—that was the task.

Brant, he felt, must be the culprit; but he could not openly accuse him. No: his disposition was rather to screen him for Rénée's sake.

Something, he felt, must be done, or the grand old business of Robert Dalton might become bankrupt, smirched with the brand of dishonourable dealing; and the hours went by, and Paul Wynyan had done nothing.

By degrees, though, he had calmed down to one definite purpose: to do everything possible to save the Dalton business for Rénée's sake—for the allegiance he owed to his old chief.

His musings were interrupted by a messenger with a letter marked 'immediate' and sealed with the arms of the presidency of Decon-cagua.

He opened it and read that the Count Villar Endoza would esteem it a personal favour if Mr Paul Wynyan would favour him with a call upon important business at his earliest convenience.

Wynyan obeyed his first impulse to say that he would come on at once.

'What does he want?' he said to himself, as soon as he was alone. 'Some fresh scheme, or a renewal of his offer about the engineership in connection with their navy?'

'No: I can't go. My work is here. It would be like showing myself as a coward and thief. She would think I ran away to avoid the exposure, and look upon me with greater contempt than ever. Let him make what offer he likes, my place is here.'

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At that moment a light seemed to flash through his brain, and he recalled the count's former offer.

'Surely'—— he began aloud; but the light was gone, and the thick darkness of ignorance had closed in once more.

'Impossible!' he muttered with a half laugh. 'A strange coincidence—that is all. Pity though that I could not go. One might get the yellow fever and be put out of one's misery for good. Well, anything for an hour's rest. Perhaps I may think more clearly after seeing him.'

He reached the Count's flat in Victoria Street within half-an-hour of the messenger's return, and was respectfully shown into the drawing-room to be warmly welcomed by Isabel, who rose from her chair where she was making believe to paint in water colours. She advanced toward him with extended hand, and with a tone of reproach in her voice, a saddened look in her eyes.

'What have I done to offend you, Mr Wynyan?' she said softly. 'I never see you now.'

'Well,' he said, trying to talk lightly and pleasantly to the gaudy little tropic butterfly, as he mentally called her. 'What can you expect from such a busy, patient drudge as I am.'

'But you should not be a busy, patient drudge,' she said with a sigh, as she fixed her large dark eyes upon him timidly. 'Papa says that if you liked, you could occupy such a splendid position; that the world is open to a man of your genius.'

'A man of my genius!' he said with a laugh.

'Don't, please,' she said plaintively. 'You hurt me.'

'I? How?'

'By speaking so mockingly of yourself.'

'Then I'll begin to praise myself,' he said.

'No, please don't do that, Mr Wynyan,' she said with another shrinking look, 'for that would hurt me more, because I should know that it would not be sincere.'

'Then what am I to say?' he cried.

'Only talk to me as you used—in that quiet grave way I always liked so much.'

'Indeed?'

'Yes: people I see,' she went on naïvely, 'are so fond of talking nonsense and silly flattery, till I feel disgusted and hate them. Of course I know I am a little bit pretty; but I can't help that, Mr Wynyan, and I don't want to be told that I am the most beautiful girl in London. Just as if I was so weak and had no common sense.'

The tears stood in her eyes for part of the time she was speaking, but she finished with an indignant flash.

'Well, a great deal of the society talk is rather vapid,' he said quietly.

'Yes: isn't it?' cried Isabel. 'You never talk to me like that. What you say always sounds sincere.'

'I hope so,' replied Wynyan; 'so let me be sincere now, and talk about business. Your father sent for me.'

'Yes: I know,' she said with a little pout, 'or else you would not have come. He has a gentleman with him for a few minutes, and he asked me to see you till he was at liberty. I'm sorry I am so dull and stupid.'

'Didn't you say you wished me to be sincere?'

'Oh yes, please,' she cried, with an eager flash of the eyes; and her hand moved toward him, but only to be drawn back, and a look of confusion overspread her features.

'I will, then,' he said quietly, 'and tell you that I don't believe you.'

'Oh! Mr Wynyan! What do you mean?'

'I don't believe you think yourself dull and stupid.'

'Ah,' she cried, with an arch look, 'you are scolding me; please go on.'

Wynyan did not go on, for he was conscious of the movement in the great curtain which screened a door; and the Count entered, bland, handsome, and courtly.

'This is very good of you, Mr Wynyan,' he said. 'How I do admire the prompt way of you English business men! I do not wonder that you rule the world.'

'Promptitude is a matter of habit, sir,' said Wynyan, who resented the effusive complimentary manner.

'One I never could acquire, my dear sir. Isabel, my darling, may I ask you to leave us? I have very important business to discuss with Mr Wynyan.'

'Oh yes, papa dearest,' she said, innocently raising her lips to his. 'Good-bye then, Mr Wynyan. Come and see us soon—in the evening, when papa does not want to talk business. He ought to come, ought he not, papa?'

'If Mr Wynyan can spare the time, no one will be more glad than I.'

'Then you will come, Mr Wynyan?' she cried with girlish eagerness, as she held out her hand, over which the engineer bent for a moment, and then waited as the graceful little figure glided over the soft carpet, passed behind the great curtain, and was gone.

'My little flower,' sighed the Count to himself, as his eyes followed his child. Then he seemed to drive away his paternal weakness, and faced his guest.

'Thank you for coming, Mr Wynyan,' he said, speaking now blandly, but with a good deal of decision. 'May I ask whether you divine the reason for my note?'

'Certainly. I can only place one interpretation upon it, sir. You are ready to renew the offer you formerly made to me.'

'That is correct, sir. And you, Mr Wynyan, you have well thought over the matter, and are ready to accept?'

'I do not say so,' replied Wynyan, gazing at the handsome courtly face before him fixedly.

'But you will before you go, Mr Wynyan, I sincerely hope. I received a despatch yesterday, urging me to come to such an arrangement at once, and—well, I like you, Mr Wynyan; I always have liked you, and I will be perfectly frank with you and undiplomatic; I place myself, sir, in your hands. Make your own terms.'

Wynyan still sat gazing at him fixedly.

'Do not be afraid, my dear sir. I think I can manage to endorse your proposal. Your position will be princely, and I tell you this, my dear Wynyan: I fully expect to return soon to the dear old country with my darling child, and when I am back I shall only be too glad to welcome you to my house as one of our warmest friends—you understand; one of our warmest friends.'

'I thank you, sir,' said Wynyan, still gazing at him.

'My dearest Isabel would be delighted. I told her, dear child, and in her girlish enthusiasm, she clapped her little hands with joy. Mr Wynyan, you ought to be a happy man. Come, sir; let me despatch a telegram to-night to my president, to announce that we shall in future have with us one of the most skilful engineers in England, who is at the same time one of my dearest friends.'

'One moment, sir. Kindly tell me what would be expected of me if I accepted this appointment.'

'Of course; I ought to have been more explicit,' said the Count. 'Forgive me. To help us by making our little navy one of the most powerful in the world.'

'By means of a new motive power?' said Wynyan quietly.

'Exactly.'

'What motive power?' said Wynyan; and the Count was silent for a few moments, meeting his visitor's gaze with an equally searching look.

'I will be frank with you, Mr Wynyan,' he said at last. 'It is a secret power—a new invention.'

'Whose, sir?'

'That I am not prepared to say, Mr Wynyan; and it does not affect our arrangement in the least.'

'I beg your pardon, sir.'

'Very well then, I am speaking in confidence, to a man of honour. I cannot tell you whose invention it is, but the right to use it—the secret of the invention—was sold to my government some little time back, and we are now waiting to carry it out.'

'I thought so,' said Wynyan sternly. 'Are you aware, sir, that your government has connived at a theft; that the purchase of this secret was part of a base, disgraceful, dishonourable action?'

'Mr Wynyan!' cried the Count, drawing himself up.

'Yes, sir; I am speaking plainly, for I feel warmly on the subject. I see now clearly enough that which my nature as that of an honest man would not have insulted another—especially my old employer's friend and guest—by believing true.'

'Mr Wynyan, what are you saying, sir?'

'This,' cried Wynyan sternly, 'that you, sir, have taken advantage of your position as the trusted friend of Robert Dalton, to gain possession of one of his most cherished secrets.'

'You are talking wildly, sir,' cried the Count.

'No; calmly and to the point. How you have worked I do not know. I cannot think that Robert Dalton would have confided in you—he would not, I am sure. There has been some miserable underhanded scheming, and you must have been mining with a tool which I suspect; but as I cannot say for certain, I will be silent and make no further charge.'

'I am glad to hear it, Mr Wynyan,' said the Count with dignity. 'You have said enough.'

'No, sir; not enough,' cried Wynyan, 'for I do charge you of having been guilty of a piece of chicanery which'——

'Sir!' cried the Count, 'I do not accept that I have done this. If I had, I have been fighting as in duty bound, in a patriotic way, for the good of my great country. As a patriot'——

'Patriot!' cried Wynyan, interrupting in his turn. 'Sir, there is no word in our language more scandalously abused than that word patriot. An adventurer fights at any cost to win pelf and success for himself, and he calls it patriotism. We have plenty of so-called patriots here, sir, but none who have been guilty of a more scoundrelly trick than yours in this theft.'

'Mr Wynyan!' cried the Count, 'in my country this would mean a meeting, possibly, sir, your death.'

'But in this country, sir, but for the fact that your position screens you, your action would probably mean the police and a visit to a court of justice.'

'I will not quarrel, sir,' said the Count sternly.

'No, we cannot quarrel,' cried Wynyan; 'but you shall hear the truth. You may, or you may not be aware that you have been tempting me to carry out my own invention for the benefit of your people, and in opposition to my own government, the rightful owners of the secret.'

'Mr Wynyan!'

'Silence, sir. You shall hear me now. Let me tell you what your dishonest act—your patriotism—entails. You will not win me over to your side, even if you have learned that I stand in a position which made me likely to be tempted.'

'Pray, go on,' said the Count coldly.

'I intend to, sir, as a stubborn Englishman should. Now listen. You and yours will reap no advantage from your purchase—for purchase it must have been—for it is a secret, and there is only one man living who can carry out the plans to success.'

'And you are that man,' said the Count with an almost imperceptible sneer.

'Yes, sir; for years I lived in the invention of that motor, and I tell you the truth; I am the only man who can carry it out to success. Lastly, let me tell you this: our government has discovered by some means that the secret has been stolen. They must know that it has been taken to Deconcagua, and they have begun their inquiries as to the way in which they have been defrauded. Are you prepared to answer them? You are a nobleman, the representative of your republic.'

The Count was silent.

'In case they do not know, sir, let me tell you this: I have been charged with the theft of the plans, with selling them; and I am seeking to clear my name. To-morrow I go straight to the government officials, and I tell them everything I know.'

'To clear your good name?' said the Count quickly.

'Yes.'

'What, then, if I play my card as well, Mr Wynyan?'

'This is England, sir. You cannot play Spanish American tricks here without risking our gallows,' cried Wynyan proudly.

'Assassination?' said Endoza with a contemptuous laugh. 'Oh no, my dear sir, I am a diplomat. I shall play a very different card, what you call the trump ace. Go and tell your officials—you, the employé of Dalton's firm, that I bought the rights in the invention. I, the accredited gentleman, will simply say yes, it is quite true; I did buy these plans—this secret—for my country in ignorance that there was anything wrong, for the inventor offered them to me.'

'Mr Dalton—the dead?' cried Wynyan, staggered.

'No, sir; Mr Wynyan the quick—I bought them of you.'

There was a dead silence after this blow had been delivered.

'You cowardly liar!' cried the young man at last.

'Diplomacy, Mr Wynyan,' said Endoza calmly. 'You have your reputation to save; I have mine. Come, sir, we have fenced enough. Had we not better sheathe our swords, and become friends. I renew my offer to you, even to my daughter's hand.'

'Sir,' said Wynyan bitterly, 'you know our language thoroughly, but of the sturdy English character you have much to learn. English credit stands good the world round. We have exceptions, I own, but we have such a being in my country as an honest man.'

'Stop one moment, Mr Wynyan. Do you mean you would say war.'

'As you would say, sir,' replied Wynyan, 'to the knife.'

The next minute the Count was standing, with his brow knit in many creases, alone.

'Yes,' he said at last; 'that will be the best. Cold-blooded dog!'

(*To be continued.*)

THE RISE AND FALL IN PETROLEUM.

It has long been an axiom in commercial circles that, when trade was good, prices were high, and when trade was bad, prices were low. Doubtless, one of the compensating benefits of bad trade has been the low price of all necessaries. Moreover, every one must have noticed the strong tendency of every commodity to fall; improvements and increased facilities in transport from all parts of the world, combined with cheapened production, have enormously lowered the value of everything compared with values ten years ago. Some articles indeed seemed to have no bottom; their value fell below the actual cost of production. Petroleum has been no exception to this rule, as it has been steadily falling in value for years. When, therefore, this product some months ago suddenly marked an extraordinary rise in value, and continued within the space of a week to double and treble this rise, such an unprecedented state of affairs occasioned a wave of excitement in the mercantile world, and an immense amount of speculation as to its cause and effect. The probability of an oil famine became a serious subject of discussion, and no wonder, when it is considered that mineral oil is largely used for illuminating purposes, and required in almost every industry that can be named as an important constituent in lubricating oils, and for other purposes too numerous to mention. On one British industry the effect was immediate and most welcome. For some years past the Scottish mineral oil trade has been in a very languishing condition, and the relief has but just come in time.

No trade has had a more checkered career, or has oftener appeared on the point of extinction, but some ingenious discovery in the utilisation of a by-product has always appeared to save it, and give it a new lease of life. Paraffin oil for burning was the original object of manufacture, but for many years the by-products have alone been earning a profit. The statement early in the year that the Standard Oil Company, which mainly controls the oil trade in America, had come to an arrangement with the Scottish companies to advance the price, would now appear to be part of a scheme to anticipate the rise which the former saw was bound to take place, due to a cause which even it could not influence, namely, lessened production by the oil-wells. An agreement of the Standard Oil Company with the proprietors of the Russian oil-fields, reported, but subsequently denied, was regarded as in the same interest.

The annual report of one of the principal Scottish oil companies says: 'The position and outlook of the trade are now more favourable than they have been for a lengthened period. An agreement for three years has been concluded between the Standard Oil Company of America and the refining companies in Scotland, by which the prices of scale and candles have been advanced; and, consequent upon the greatly diminished production of crude petroleum, an increase has taken place in the prices of burning oil and kindred products.'

Though an inconvenience to the consumer, a moderate rise in the price of mineral oil is of very little importance compared with a large permanent increase in price, which is a very serious contingency to have to face. It is the possibility of this which has agitated the public mind and rendered the situation interesting. From all accounts it appears certain that the Pennsylvania oil territory has become much less productive than it used to be. The explanation of the Standard Oil Company is to the effect that the consumption of petroleum is at least 10,000 barrels a day in excess of the output. Now, in America, oil is sold in what are called Pipeline Certificates, and while there used always to be outstanding certificates for 40,000,000 barrels of oil, these have been reduced to about 4,000,000. An independent authority says that in the past two years the stock of oil has fallen off from 18,000,000 barrels to about 4,500,000, and that at present oil production is 5,000,000 to 6,000,000 barrels a month behind consumption; so that it is plain that at the present rate, if no big oil strikes are made, it is only a question of time until the stock on hand in the United States is consumed. The Standard Oil Company is said to have lately expended about 2,000,000 dollars for oil rights in Pennsylvania and West Virginia in anticipation of the scarcity. 'Wild-catting'—that is, prospecting in territory not known to be oil-bearing—is immensely in favour, we are told, and it is to be hoped will soon yield a plentiful result.

Two years previous to January 1895, the price of oil was fifty-three cents per barrel; in January it had risen to one dollar, while less than four months later it touched two dollars.

Owing to a peculiar policy of the American oil trade, until recently the price of refined oil has been lower than crude oil; but this condition has now experienced a sharp reversal, and during the first quarter of the year, refined quality rose from $5.70 to $7.10, while during the same period crude oil has advanced from six to seven dollars. Petroleum statistics from other centres all tell the same tale.

Next to these oil-fields, one of the most important is that of Ohio. For illuminating purposes this oil is not nearly so suitable as that of Pennsylvania; it resembles the Russian oils in this respect, that there is a considerable waste in refining it, though some of the waste can be utilised for making lubricants and for fuel. Crude oil from the Ohio region is said to yield only thirty-three per cent. of illuminating fluid, as against nearly ninety per cent. from Pennsylvania; but the Ohio refined oil is nearly as good as the Pennsylvanian.

Naturally, the oil territory is being prospected to an extraordinary extent in the endeavour to increase production, while something like one thousand five hundred new pipe-wells have been sunk, a number constantly increasing. Oil-wells which had been abandoned as unprofitable have been reopened, and every means taken, such as the explosion of dynamite in the shafts, to stimulate the flow.

The view that has so far been here presented is that a permanent rise in the value of this indispensable commodity has been established, but it is right to state that some people do not hold this opinion; they consider that a combination of the interests controlling the supply is chiefly responsible for the advance in petroleum, and the scare over for the time being, they are doing their best to test the question, though time only can solve it. The highest price paid for American refined was 9½d. per gallon; a month previously this had been 5½d.; Russian oil, which had been less than 5d., went up to 9d. quite as rapidly. These values have not been sustained; the trade held aloof, and the price of American oil went back to 7d. per gallon, and of Russian to 6¾d.—about 2½d. below the highest recorded. In September the price both of American and of Russian petroleum 'on the spot' was 5½d.

Another feature of the situation to be considered is, that in America the consumption of oil as a fuel and heat generator has been making great strides, and that, given a reasonable price, it possesses some very great advantages over other fuel. Its efficiency is specially great in heating furnaces, forges, puddling furnaces, and in boilers of all kinds; and that the combustion is much more perfect than coal is shown by an almost total absence of smoke.

Other applications are in glass-works, potteries, ovens, dryers, refuse destructors, and many other industries. Less attendance is required, it is far more cleanly in the way of dust and dirt, and less expensive in the matter of repairs. As compared with coal, about one hundred and ten gallons of crude oil will do the work of a ton of the best coal, and there is no reason to think that finality has been reached in this result.

As is well known, one of the causes of the hitherto cheap price of petroleum has been its successful conveyance in bulk by means of tank steamers. One of the most conspicuously successful examples of the experiment of using petroleum residuum as fuel in the furnaces of marine boilers has been a voyage of the s.s. *Baku Standard*. This tank steamer had her furnaces altered, to enable them to burn liquid fuel instead of coal; thus adjusted, she steamed from the Tyne to Philadelphia, meeting with heavy weather all the way. Her consumption of fuel is said to have been twenty tons of oil instead of thirty tons of coal, and it is claimed that besides the advantage of much greater cleanliness, a considerable saving in space and cost of fuel was obtained. Probably there is yet required a good deal of further information before an exact comparison can be made, but at any rate, here we have a case of a vessel that has steamed across the Atlantic and back, using oil fuel only. The time taken on the homeward run to Avonmouth, namely fourteen days, is not unduly long for a small-powered steamer in bad weather. The substitution of oil for coal in steamships, if ever it came about, would be a wonderful improvement, and one that would confer untold benefits on marine firemen. But the applications of mineral oil are endless in possibility, provided it continue cheap enough.

Allusion has been made to the Russian petroleum trade; this is of much later growth than the American. Russian petroleum only began to enter the British market in large quantities ten years ago. The oil-fields of Baku are by far the most productive known, and since 1883 (practically, operations on any important scale only commenced in 1872) the production has undergone enormous expansion, rising from five and a half million barrels in 1883 to over twenty million barrels in 1890. It has been stated on good authority that of the four hundred wells open in the Baku fields in 1883, one has thrown up as much oil in one day as the whole of the twenty-five thousand oil-wells of America. In another case, over £11,000 worth of oil has run to waste in one day from a single well. There is therefore good reason to believe that Russian oil can easily supply the deficiency caused by a considerable falling off in the supply of American petroleum, although it must be borne in mind that Russian crude oil only yields thirty per cent. of refined, as against ninety per cent. in the case of America. The Russian trade is largely in the hands of Messrs Nobel Brothers, who occupy a position much in the same relation to this industry as does the Standard Oil Company in America. That there are probably immense undiscovered oil deposits in Siberia is partly confirmed by the recent discovery of naphtha springs in the Transbaikal region. In the Amur Valley, these promise so satisfactorily that a syndicate of Russian capitalists has been formed, and has applied for permission to the authorities to be allowed to exploit the territory on a large scale. Oil-fields of some importance exist in Java and Sumatra, and there are several Dutch companies established in these islands, which possess wells varying in depth from 75 to 1850 feet. The Java petroleum yields a large proportion of valuable by-products, such as lubricating oils; the Sumatra oil produces more kerosene and less paraffin.

There are other petroleum fields in the east of Europe and in Asia, that of the Bolika district in Galicia yielding three hundred and fifty barrels of raw petroleum per day in 1883. Mineral wax is found at Boryslav, on the north slope of the Carpathians. The petroleum fields of Roumania are hopeful. In Japan, the petroleum fields were worked at one time, but latterly, owing to the competition of American oil, the industry is said to have been abandoned. Whether the increased value of oil will now make it worth while to reopen and develop these Japanese oil-fields is, however, a doubtful question. One of these days, too, the virgin oil territory in Canada and India will be tapped, so that a decreasing supply from Pennsylvania may be faced with something like equanimity. The petroleum basin of the Mackenzie River is reported as one of the richest in the world; but its distance, four hundred miles north of the Canadian Pacific Railway, has been against its exploitation hitherto.

An extremely interesting problem awaits us much nearer home, and that is, are there oil-fields in England? Since petroleum has been found in many different strata, there is no *a priori* reason why it should not be found in England. Professor Boverton Redwood is sanguine on the point, and after having made as exhaustive an investigation on the Ashwick estate in Somersetshire as circumstances permitted, reports that appearances strongly favour the existence of petroleum in large deposits, and at any rate in quite sufficient quantity to warrant provisional expenditure for boring. On the recommendation of Professor Redwood and other scientific advice, dynamite was used in the spring, with the result that the water came up thickly coated with oil. The official report is that the specimens of oil obtained were transparent, of straw colour, exhibited practically no fluorescence, and had an odour resembling that of refined rather than crude oil. It had a specific gravity of ·816 at 60° Fahrenheit, and a flashing-point of 175° Fahrenheit by the closed test. In other words, here is a high-class oil, which should require very little process of refining to render it able to compete with some of the best products in the market on terms of equality.

From the foregoing, it is pretty apparent that we need not fear any oil famine in the near future.

AN ADVENTUROUS WEEK.

CHAPTER IV.—CONCLUSION.

It was noon when our flight ended in a gray, faded settlement, girdled by cliffs save where we had come upon it, and where a narrow defile led from it down to the coast. The church-bell was jingling for some unapparent reason as we reached the dishevelled building itself.

We were soon surrounded by the villagers, agape for intelligence. They received the news of the patriots' reverse in silence—at least the men did; the women wept.

Happily, there was an apothecary here. We conveyed Naylor to his house, prepared to hear the worst, for the poor fellow's face told its own tale.

The man wore horn spectacles that gave him an owl-like look. His tedious pedantry was also suggestive of the owl's sham demeanour of exceeding wisdom. De Blessant was worth two of him as a medical man. But neither of them, nor all the physicians in the world, could give Naylor his life-blood again.

'Do stop them bothering about me, old fellow,' he whispered at length. 'I know I'm booked.'

I said what I could to persuade him to think otherwise, and told him we were within a mile or two of the port in which the *Panhellenion* lay.

'Once we get you on board, you'll do,' I said, hoping against hope.

The mention of the steamer seemed to brighten him.

'Are you sure you can get to her?' he asked.

The apothecary laughed to scorn the idea that one little defeat in the mountains meant the collapse of the insurrection. According to him, it was rather the very thing that was most wanted to make the Christians fight their best. No Turk would dare from the north to invade the southern ravines of the Madara Vouna; and that was the only direction open to them.

'Then there's one thing you can do for me,' Naylor continued, speaking with more and more difficulty as the internal bleeding progressed.

'Whatever it is, I'll do it,' I said.

'My notes—take them with you. You'll be returning to England?'

'As soon as I can—with you.'

He shook his head, smiling again. He knew better than that.

'Made on the spot, you know, they have value,' he murmured. 'You promise?'

I told him I would try to do something more arduous than that if he wished it.

'There's nothing else,' he replied. 'I'm just a straw in the wind: no wife, brother, sister, or any one. Thank God for it, too!'

We could do nothing but watch over him to the last. There were moments when I should have enjoyed the excitement of defending the apothecary's house against attack: this patient waiting for the end of a bold, reckless life was so miserable. But no such chance offered. The village was still as the grave, except when the cracked church-bell jangled periodically, and that was worse than the brooding silence.

Once he rallied De Blessant about his inadequacy as a prophet.

'Oh, but, *mon cher garçon*,' retorted the Frenchmen, 'who knows? I may follow you soon. I shall revenge you, for one thing. Give me a death like yours a thousand times sooner than on my feather-bed in Paris.'

To which poor Naylor replied almost inaudibly, with a painful attempt to laugh: 'Bunkum, my dear fellow!'

Towards eight o'clock he breathed his last, making me feel wretchedly alone. Though I had known him but a few days, I had learned to love him as a friend. Almost his last words were an injunction to us not to bother ourselves with his body. The Sphakia churchyard, he said, was good enough for him, if it was good enough for the Sphakiots.

And that was what we did with him the following morning. There were graves ready dug in the churchyard—ominous sign!—and in one of them (which the sun shone on more than on the others) we laid him, in the presence of all the village, including several other patriot refugees from Thyatis's army.

What had become of the bulk of our fighting friends we did not learn until that afternoon. Then we made our way to the coast and, under guidance, skirted the tremendous spurs of the Madara Vouna until we reached the snug creek in which the *Panhellenion* lay like a nut in its kernel. Here the confusion was bewildering. The patriots made bright patches of colour in the cramped place, and their chatter and declamations raised echoes for the mountain walls to toy with and cast out (so one fancied) almost to the lazy cruisers in the offing. Some two hundred of them were believed to have been killed; and, worse still, the wounded had had to be left. Under the circumstances, it seemed small consolation that more Moslems than Christians had come to their end in the affray.

Thyatis was not here when we arrived. But he was looked for every moment. Pending his and the other leaders' coming, the captain of the *Panhellenion* could say nothing about his return (or attempted return, as might be) to the Ægean. He had already disembarked the cargo of arms, ammunition, and provisions sent by the insurrectionary agents in Athens, and had ballasted the boat in readiness for his next trip at an hour or two's notice.

De Blessant got his letters.

'I stay here,' he repeated, when I asked him if they made him alter his plans. 'I am like *le bon Naylor;* there is no one except *la petite* to whom I report myself, and she will excuse.'

He was not to be dissuaded. It was the first defeat with which he had been associated in Crete, and his French blood thirsted to avenge it. So he said, and his gallant looks bore out his words. The Sphakiots could have done with a hundred men like him; and so, perhaps, could Crete.

As for me, I was very uncomfortable. The old business instincts were fidgeting in me. I was wronging my partner and all who depended on us by this misapplication of my time. Moreover (and chiefly, I daresay), I had had quite enough of war, especially this guerilla warfare in the mountains. My legs were stiff as an old man's with their unwonted exercise.

The captain of the *Panhellenion* could speak a moderate amount of English, and was disposed to be friendly. I was, he said, welcome to sleep on the steamer, so that I might not miss the chance of getting to Greece, whenever that presented itself. But he warned me of the new danger I was facing in thus getting aboard a vessel that would be blown to bits by the first Turkish gunboat that got the opportunity. Of this, however, I took small heed. Merely on the balance of risks, the *Panhellenion* was the thing for me. And besides, from the twinkle in the captain's eye, I surmised that the patriot ship was not to be overtaken by any ordinary cruiser of the Sultan's fleet.

The rest of that day was spent amid the babble of the insurgents. De Blessant and I both agreed that they were even better at talking than fighting. But they need not have quarrelled among themselves as they did. This seemed to be the worst portent of all as to the final issue of the revolt.

Thyatis was expected hourly, but he did not show until the next day. Then he appeared, haggard, fierce, with a bandaged arm, and a 'do-or-die' demeanour that was not encouraging. The Turks had so far been content to establish themselves securely in two of the blockhouses. Their aim, he said, was to get some light artillery up from the plain. Until that was done, they would not venture on aggressive movements to the south.

So far well.

This news, and the knowledge that there were still thousands of fighting Sphakiots left, restored the spirits of the warriors by the sea-board. Whatever else had happened to Thyatis, he had not lost energy, and in a few hours his influence invigorated the tone of the place. The *Panhellenion's* cargo was very welcome, and the letters from Athens about future supplies were also favourable.

As the upshot, it was decided that, weather and the situation of the cruisers permitting, the *Panhellenion* should be off that night. And so I prepared to look my last at Crete—if not for ever, at least for a very long time. I had, of course, resisted Thyatis's warm invitation to continue with him and his men. Even for the moral encouragement's sake, I did not think it worth while to offer myself as a sacrifice to the Sphakists, like poor Naylor.

The cruisers somehow seemed to have got an inkling of what was in the wind. As the day waned they stood closer inshore than hitherto, and, either for pastime or a menace, fired big guns landwards. Probably the victorious Moslems above had found a means of signalling their news to them, and this had momentarily inspirited the lethargic admiral who was in charge of the blockade.

'It is nothing,' said Thyatis, with a contemptuous upheaval of his nostrils, when I mentioned the firing, and hoped it did not imply increased vigilance. 'We would run under their noses, and they would not see us.'

But I was not so sure. The highlander's temperament was of too unreasonably sanguine a kind to fit well into what I suppose I may call my British prudence.

There was a young moon this night. The thing was pretty to see, in combination with the silvery rippling and throbbing of the Mediterranean and the stupendous dark mountain wall at our backs. But I would rather not have seen it. The young thing would grow in size and luminosity every day, and thus the loss of each opportunity of getting out of Crete would add to the probability of our not getting out of it at all.

But such thoughts were not to be encouraged. The *Panhellenion's* furnace fires were already glowing, and when the captain gave the word, it only remained for the engineers to let us loose. Eleven o'clock was the time fixed for the start. Once again my pulse began to rise as this hour drew near.

I had but to shake hands with Thyatis and De Blessant and wish them 'Godspeed' in their enterprises.

The former humiliated me by thanking me for what I had done for the cause: he did it with his old exuberance of speech and earnestness; and he ended by entreating me to try to interest the British Government on the patriots' behalf. I made no rash promises.

'Adieu, *mon ami, et bon voyage*,' said De Blessant, when we had drunk to each other; 'we shall meet in Paris some day, and you shall see me *décoré* by the Cretan Republic.'

'Yes,' added Thyatis, 'that will be it—remember.'

I am still remembering. But there is no Cretan Republic, and therefore no decoration for Gaston de Blessant, whom besides I have not seen since. He may be dead, like Naylor; or he may be the sage, corpulent father of two well-grown children, and the husband of a discreet wife in the Chaussée d'Antin or elsewhere, for all I know to the contrary. The enthusiasms of youth die with one's youth: very properly, no doubt.

We were on the point of starting, when there was a cry to stop. A little boat pushed off, with three men in it and two rowers. Our passenger list was to be increased by these three. I watched them come aboard, and suddenly my heart became agitated as I recognised the venerable beard of Nicolopoulos. Yes, it was he, unmistakably. I went up to him, held out my hand, and said I was glad to see him. But I was really nothing of the kind. It would have been very different had his daughter been with him. Alone, however, bound for Athens at such a time, and that beautiful girl left by herself in a land like Crete!

He said 'Good-evening' in Greek mechanically, as he just touched my palm.

The *Panhellenion* began to move. There were subdued shouts of goodwill towards us, as we stole darkly towards the rocky mouth of our haven. Not a light was allowed on board to give the least hint of us to the cruisers.

Nicolopoulos was about to lose himself in the throng on deck, when I checked him. I was impressed by a sort of hang-dog expression on his face seen in the starlight. Also, I was sure he had not recognised me.

'Forgive me,' I said, 'but has anything happened?'

Now he seemed to realise that it was English, not Greek, that was spoken. He looked at me. I do not want to see a look like that again on any man's face.

'Oh,' he said hesitatingly, with a bitter smile, 'it is you, Mr Graham. So we are to be fellow-passengers! It is well.'

'What is wrong?' I urged. 'Is *anything* the matter?'

'The matter! Yes, much, sir. They have taken my daughter from me. She is condemned. She is a leper, like her mother. Gracious Heaven! I knew it was in her; but I loved her so much. The demons! It is because I hate the Government. That is what is the matter, Mr Graham. I wish to see the captain.'

Helena a leper, and cast out into that settlement of pitiable misery, that place of horror! Nicolopoulos's words seemed to blast me as her seizure must have blasted him. I sat on a heap of rope, and could think of nothing else as we sped rapidly along, hugging the shore, with hardly a whisper on board.

. . . . . .

I did not go to bed that night. Somehow, too, I did not feel as glad as I ought to have felt when the captain came among us and told me, as well as the rest, that the worst risks were over. It must have been two o'clock in the morning then.

With Nicolopoulos I did not exchange another word. What could I say? But I felt for him, deeply, unforgetably.

We reached Athens in the evening, and all was well. A week later I was in London, considerably browner than when I had left Victoria Station some five weeks earlier, and considerably more experienced.

A few dried rose-leaves are now all the visible remembrances I possess of my stirring week in beautiful, and still unhappy, Crete.

I fulfilled poor Naylor's request. His 'copy' was printed and read; but it would have been better appreciated if the readers could have known him as I had. After all, perhaps, he was not greatly to be pitied. He might have died in a worse cause than that of Cretan freedom; hit in front, too.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE annual meeting of the British Association has always been looked forward to with interest, not only by those who take part in its proceedings, but by the general public who like to have this periodical report of the world's progress in the field of scientific knowledge. Perhaps these meetings are not regarded in quite the same light as they were a few years ago, for now the proceedings are to a great extent anticipated by statements in the technical press, and even in the general newspapers. For a scientific man admits every one to his confidence, and no matter what the importance of a discovery may be, it is given as freely and quickly to the world as if it were a mere piece of gossip. In matters of first importance, the British Association is also anticipated by the learned societies before which papers are read, which, so to speak, take all the cream. Still the Association does useful work, and provides an annual outing for a number of ladies and gentlemen who are interested in its proceedings. More than this, it spends about £1000 annually in the great cause of original research, and has put away a handsome reserve fund in case of need.

The Association met this year at Ipswich for the second time, after an interval of forty-four years. It is noteworthy that on the former occasion the meeting numbered amongst its members Tyndall, Huxley, Murchison, Owen, and Nasmyth, besides other names which have become famous. Ipswich has since the year 1851 nearly doubled its population, and naturally, when Sir Douglas Galton took the chair the other day as president, he addressed a far larger audience than did Sir George Airy on the previous occasion. The subjects dealt with were of the most varied nature, and, generally speaking, the meeting of the British Association this year has been a success.

The subject of motor-propelled carriages (see *Chambers's Journal*, No. 610, Sept. 7, 1895) is just now exciting great interest, and there is little doubt that a new and important industry is springing up in their manufacture. Sir David Salomons, who is a skilled electrician, has recently been describing in glowing terms the different vehicles of this type which he had had an opportunity of examining in Paris. One of them was a tricycle driven by a tiny petroleum motor, weighing ninety pounds, and costing £52. 'In order,' he says, 'to set the machine in motion, the rider mounts, turns a tap to admit the petroleum, which at the same time turns on the electric current (this is to furnish the spark to ignite the petroleum vapour); he then propels the tricycle with his feet in the usual manner, until he finds that the motor is working. Another handle releases the treadles, and the tricycle is then in full swing. On mounting a hill, the rider can assist the speed by gearing up the pedals again, and using the feet, thus adding the animal to the engine power.' There are also being constructed a chaise, Victoria, phaeton, &c., at prices varying from £350 to £500. Nor must we omit to mention the 'steam-horse' which can be joined to an ordinary carriage instead of bone and muscle.

Mr G. J. Symons, F.R.S., the celebrated meteorologist, has lately been 'interviewed,' and as a result, some very interesting particulars relative to his work have found their way into print. Mr Symons describes himself as a collector and compiler of the observations of others, for he is in correspondence with no fewer than three thousand voluntary workers scattered over the United Kingdom, who transmit to him at regular intervals records of rainfall in their particular localities. These records are of the greatest value, for the whole science of hydrology depends upon them. Our supply of water, the first requisite of existence, depends upon the rainfall, for rivers and springs are fed from the clouds. When any question therefore arises relative to water supply, the records furnished by Mr Symons through his three thousand coadjutors to the meteorological office are first of all consulted. The daily reading of the rain-gauge found in the grounds of many a country-house and rectory through the kingdom is considered a pleasant duty, and is none the less valuable because voluntarily performed.

The railway companies have lately once more proved their ability to cover the distance between London and Aberdeen in a remarkably short time, but all will feel relieved that the 'race to the North' has been a mere demonstration of what steam on good roads can do. Prudent people consider the excessive pace attained to be unsafe, and many experience something akin to sea-sickness as a result of the excessive vibration. Trains have since been run from London to Carlisle, a distance of three hundred miles, without a single stop, and without any undue heating of the bearings. This is a remarkable achievement. The most useful outcome of these wonderful exhibitions of power on the part of our northern railways will probably prove to be the attention which they have directed to the shortcomings of some of the other lines. Two of the southern railways have become quite notorious for their bad service, ill-equipped trains, and constant want of punctuality, and it is difficult to understand how this lamentable state of things is allowed to go on year after year without any apparent attempt at amelioration.

Some very fine photographs of the moon have lately been exhibited by MM. Lœwy and P. Pruiseux at the Academy of Sciences, Paris. The negatives have been enlarged, and copies have been sent to all the principal societies. These enlarged pictures offer great facilities in the study of the moon's surface, for every detail is shown with wonderful clearness. Each picture embraces a great expanse of surface, and it is believed that by their help many undecided points with regard to our satellite may be cleared up. The authors of these pictures have given to the Academy some of the results at which they have arrived after studying them. They agree with Laplace's theory in believing that the great reflective power of the moon is due to its crust being of solid matter, similar to our volcanic rocks. And they then proceed to theorise upon the origin of the craters and valleys seen on its surface, suggesting hypotheses which will no doubt be contested, but which show that the photographs have raised many important questions with regard to our nearest neighbour in space.

The Isle of Man now possesses a mountain electric railway, which runs from Laxey, where the famous gigantic water-wheel is found, to the summit of Snaefell, a distance of nearly five miles. The gauge of the railway is three feet six inches, and between the rails there is a central one which is clasped by double wheels attached to the bogies of the cars. The overhead wire system has been adopted, and the current is generated by four Lancashire boilers of one hundred and fifty horse-power each, five horizontal engines of over one hundred horse-power each, and five powerful dynamos of the Mather and Platt type. The power exerted is sufficient to work three or more cars, each loaded with forty-eight passengers, the speed being about eight miles per hour. The railway has a remarkably even gradient throughout its length.

It would seem that light railways worked by electricity have a very great future before them in opening up districts which at present are cut off from our great trunk lines. For a long time such a railway has been projected between Derby and Ashbourne, in order to provide an outlet for dairy and agricultural produce from some of the richest milk-producing districts in Derbyshire. Such a railway, too, would doubtless be largely patronised by tourists to the famous Peak scenery. This scheme has lately crystallised into a proposal that the railway should be of the electric type. The cost of an ordinary railway worked by steam was estimated at from £30,000 to £50,000 per mile. An electric railway is of course very much cheaper than that, and the cost of running per car mile is 4·06d., as against 8·57d. by steam. It is proposed that the line should run by the side of the existing road between the two places, and that in the villages it should take the centre of the roadway. There would be fixed stopping-places, but the cars could stop anywhere to take up or set down passengers. It is estimated that the total cost of the line would be £62,300, and that the passenger traffic alone would realise £7500 per annum, to say nothing of the agricultural produce, for the conveyance of which the railway is primarily intended.

A most interesting letter on the effects of lightning has been sent to the *Times* by Mr Tomlinson, F.R.S., who gives in it the early history of lightning-conductors. Architects believed that they did harm by attracting the lightning, and the Admiralty seems to have shared a similar belief. In 1841 Sir John Rennie was employed by the Admiralty to build two victualling-houses at Devonport, and each of these had a tall chimney—one being protected with a lightning-conductor, and the other left bare. Rennie called on Snow Harris—the great advocate for the application of conductors to ships—and most indignantly pointed out that the charge for conductors for the chimneys had been struck out of the estimates. Harris said, 'Well, never mind, nature will avenge us.' And the words came true, for shortly afterwards a bifurcated stroke of lightning fell on the two victualling-houses; the protected buildings suffering no injury, while the unprotected chimney was torn open, with other damage to the building. The accident made lightning-conductors popular. Harris was knighted, received a civil list pension of £200 per annum, and a sum of £6000 in addition.

A new road skate has recently formed the subject of a demonstration at Celtic Park, Glasgow, upon which occasion James Smart, the champion, and two other well-known skaters gave the invention a thorough trial on the cement cycling track. Two miles were covered by Smart in seven minutes, and his action, which is much the same as when skating on ice, was much admired. The new skate is eighteen inches in length, and it runs on two rubber-tyred wheels, one behind the foot and the other in front. It is patented by Messrs Anderson & Son of Edinburgh.

At the autumn meeting of the Iron and Steel Institute a number of papers were read, most of them, from their technical character, being interesting only to those immediately concerned. Mr Wiggin's paper, however, in which he took for his subject the advantages of the comparatively new and remarkable alloy known as nickel steel, has a much wider interest, for it deals with a subject of great importance to the community at large. He opened his paper by pointing out the long-continued opposition which was made to the introduction of steel, which only ceased when improvements were introduced into the manufacture of mild steel, and greater uniformity was secured. In the same way that steel had superseded the use of wrought iron, he believed nickel steel would gradually take the place of ordinary steel. Nickel steel was now being produced with a tensile strength fully 30 per cent. higher than ordinary steel, and an elastic limit at least 75 per cent. higher. The alloy possessed remarkable uniformity, the nickel being evenly distributed throughout the ingot; and for structural purposes, as well as for boilers, ships, and artillery, it was unequalled. A terribly severe test to which this alloy was put at the ordnance works, Sweden, well demonstrated its marvellous strength. In a cast nickel-steel gun tube was placed a cast-iron shell charged with picric acid. This shell was exploded in the tube, the only result upon the tube being that it was expanded 0·07 inches. A second explosion of the same kind, in the same tube, had no further effect upon it. Successful results had also been recorded with the use of nickel-steel armour-plates for ships. This new alloy is being much employed in the United States, as well as in Germany, France, and Russia, and it is a matter for surprise that it has not made as forward a progress in our own country.

Most of us have long regarded our system of trial by jury as an almost perfect method of obtaining even-handed justice, for the men on the jury are chosen hap-hazard, and any one of them who from any circumstance may be suspected of having a leaning towards the prisoner or prosecutor, is at once disqualified from service. It is therefore with uncomfortable feelings that we read the results of some investigations into the psychology of jurymen which Dr T. D. Crothers has recently brought before the notice of the Medico-legal Society of America. The bad air, the cramped position, and the hurried meals to which jurymen are, as a rule, subjected affect them in a marked degree. In addition to this there is a brain fatigue in following a tangled skein of evidence in a protracted or complicated case which would be in itself enough to upset a rational being; and owing to these causes some jurymen will get vindictive, some careless, and some ready to agree to anything. Should a juryman be already the victim of dyspepsia, or suffering from any nervous complaint, he is more powerfully affected still; and we fear that there is a great deal of truth in Dr Crothers's assertion that 'the psychology of a jury on a long trial furnishes a range of facts which, when once understood, might make it possible to predict a verdict with great certainty, no matter what the evidence.'

Dr Schweinfurth pleads for less vandalism in Egyptian excavations. He complains that while the searchers are attracted by everything in the shape of an inscription, statuettes, pictures, papyrus rolls, and scarabs, organic materials are lost, and often ruthlessly trodden under foot. He tells us that this ignorant and contemptuous destruction of materials of botanical and zoological investigation is depriving students of the means of solving important problems. An exact study of the bones of domestic animals, as well as those of the chase, should have been especially inviting, as it would have been possible to fix the order of appearance of each kind by means of chronologically established finds. An examination of the vegetable remains, originally placed in the tombs as offerings to the dead, or in the form of garlands of flowers, would also lead to invaluable results. At present, explorers neglect these things altogether, and Dr Schweinfurth does useful work in calling attention to the subject.

RUNGA'S REVENGE.

By Mrs Frank Penny.

It was Nellama's wedding day. The tom-toms were drumming and the panpipes were wailing their strange music through the Hindu village. The nautch-girl from the temple was there, and at intervals her voice was heard in wedding-song. Nellama was a proud and happy girl, although she looked so shy. When addressed, she dropped her chin upon her breast in decorous and speechless modesty, which was quite the right and proper thing for a Hindu maiden to do. All the same there were moments when she stole a peep at the handsome Peroo so gaily decked out with wreaths of jasmin and oleander. The marriage ceremonies had been completed, with all their rites of fire and oil and sugar-candy—a strange mixture of the mysterious and the childish—and Nellama was to be conducted to her husband's house.

Peroo was a conjurer by profession. It had been his father's and his grandfather's before him for many generations, and he was reckoned a prince amongst his people, for he had restored to the tribe the art of suspended animation. This was his story.

Many years ago his great-grandfather had made a reputation which still survived in the village, though the old man had been dead many years. The tale was still told in the place, of how the old Peroo—they all bore the same name—had been buried alive before some great English Sahibs; how rice had been planted above his grave and had blossomed into ear and yellowed to harvest; how it had been cut; and then only had the grave been opened. The opening took place before the English gentlemen, and—so it was reported and unhesitatingly believed by the villagers—Peroo was found alive. It was a great triumph for the tribe, and brought them much wealth. People from all parts came to see the wonder, and to bring offerings to one who was so favoured by the gods. Time passed, and Peroo became an old man; the trick was beyond his powers, and he began to think of passing his mantle on to the shoulders of others. But heredity had something to do with it; and, alas that it should be so! none other of the tribe was found to be so gifted. They brought him strong young men, handsome boys and fine babies; he prepared them and made the necessary passes, but without result. Great was the consternation and grief as year after year went by and no one was found to perform the miraculous feat. One day, when the old man's son and grandson were absent on one of their long itinerating rounds, performing their tricks and gathering rupees from town to town, a girl of sixteen came screaming into his room. She was the wife of his grandson. 'My son is dead! Stiff and cold I found him in his little bed. Come and see.'

Old Peroo hobbled off to the women's side of the house. The women had already begun their weeping and mourning. He thrust them all aside with small ceremony and bent over the boy. As he examined him, a sudden light sprang into the old man's eye. He stood up and clasped his hands as he cried: 'The gift! the gift!'

Then passing his hands over the body, the rigidness disappeared; under his touch the child heaved a deep sigh, drew in his breath, and opened his eyes. The women stood looking on in awe and wonder, and one old crone, who remembered Peroo's performances in his young days, took up the joyful cry, and sped through the village to tell it. Peroo ordered some food to be brought. When the child had been fed, he sent away the women; five minutes later he was leaning over the rigid form once more. Yes, it was true; power had been restored to the family once more, and his old eyes had lived to see it. He sat by the charpoy on which the unconscious boy lay, and watched him for the space of an hour; then he recalled him to life. The little lad sat up and rubbed his eyes.

'I have had dreams, grandfather; I dreamt that I was a bird on a cliff, and I saw myself sleeping below; you watched by my side, even as you are watching now.'

The old man smiled; he had not forgotten his own dreams. When the two men came back they were told the great news. Old Peroo had a long interview with his son and grandson, and he showed them many strange things. He gave minute directions how the ears and nostrils were to be stopped with clay; how the body was to be clothed; how the restorative passes were to be made. He told them about the tomb for incarceration, and the care that must be observed in its preparation; failure in this respect might cost the performer his life. Then the old man took to his bed; there was nothing more to live for; he had laid his mantle on the shoulders of another, and the honour of the family was preserved. The next morning they found him dead.

The younger Peroo grew up to strong and lusty manhood, and on this important day, when the whole village was rejoicing, he was taking to himself a wife, the sweet and gentle Nellama, as good and obedient a girl as ever breathed. Who shall say that there is no love amongst these Hindu maids? It is only the highest castes that are *gosha*, or hidden. Nellama's family, though wealthy, was not of high caste, and she had never been doomed to a life behind the curtain. She and her companions had run about the village as children, and from babyhood she had known Peroo. When her parents had betrothed her to him, both he and she had allowed their thoughts to dwell on each other, and mutual love had sprung up with tropical rapidity. The young people were not allowed the liberty permitted to English lads and lasses in their courting; but these very restraints only served, like the blast on the fire, to fan the flame the brighter.

Nellama's sisters, aunts, and cousins stood around her as she awaited the escort which was to take her to the house of the bridegroom.

'Lucky girl!' exclaimed a young matron still in her teens. 'Peroo has plenty of fine jewels to hang round your neck; and his house is full of brass and copper pots.'

'But what says Runga? Look at his scowling face! It is ugly with disappointment and anger,' said another girl.

Nellama gave a little shiver of fear at the mention of the discarded suitor's name. She had had nothing to do with his rejection; Hindu maidens are the last people to be consulted in such matters, even though they have to play the important part of bride.

'Ah, Nellama! The bridegroom is coming to carry his bride to his house!' cried the girls in the greatest excitement.

As the procession approached the house, it was met by an official in gorgeous dress, scarlet coat, and turban of white and gold. He was only a servant, but the glory of his master's office was reflected in the magnificent person of the man. He was the chuprassee of the English Government agent who ruled the province in the Queen's name. It had come to his worshipful ears that Peroo could perform that most wonderful feat of being buried alive, and he would see it. He could honour his poor village with his presence, if he would consent to perform before him. Peroo signified his willingness to accede to the Commissioner's request, after receiving a hint as to the remuneration.

The wedding festivities proceeded with even greater zest and spirit than before. This was good news; and the profits of the show would pay for all the wedding expenses, which, as usual, were large in proportion to the means of the family. There was one person, however, who did not join in the general rejoicing, and that was Nellama. She was proud enough of her handsome husband; and she meant to sing his praises loudly every morning, when she went to the well with the other women to draw water for the house. But in her secret heart she feared Runga's jealousy. The man had taken his jilting with a bad grace; he had not been treated well over the matter of the wedding, although Nellama's father was quite justified in giving his daughter, according to their custom, to the richer suitor. Moreover, he was consumed with envy over his rival's professional success. He considered that the precious gift should by right have been his, he being Peroo's senior by two or three years, and he imagined that he had in some way been deprived of his birthright by the younger man. If Peroo were removed, it might come to him. He had let drop sentiments of this kind in Nellama's hearing in days gone by, and they returned upon her with force, now that Peroo had grown so dear. Indian women love passionately, and their instincts teach them to guard vigilantly and look with suspicion on their enemies. Runga was an enemy, and the beautiful girl trembled for her prosperous husband as his success increased.

'I will watch him like a mother,' she whispered to herself, as she crept away from his sleeping form that wedding night, and laid herself before the door like a faithful hound. 'No hand but mine shall prepare his food; no foot shall cross the threshold of his sleeping room except over my body.'

Four days later the chuprassee in his gorgeous coat and turban appeared again in the village. He was more important than ever, and made almost a royal progress to Peroo's house, attended by a crowd of admiring villagers.

'He bade me say that he would be here at four o'clock,' was the message from his Excellency. All was now ready. The news spread through the village rapidly, reaching the outlying hamlets by noon, and a steady flow of visitors set in for the two hours preceding the performance. At eleven the grave was finished, and the men returned to their houses for dinner—a meal of curry and rice. Nellama had everything ready for her Peroo. She had taken infinite pains in the preparation of his last meal; and she was more than rewarded for her trouble by the evident approval and pleasure written on his face, as she placed the dish of white rice and the basin of savoury curry before him with the little brass bowls of various chutneys he loved so well. Hindu women do not dine with their husbands, and Nellama had no appetite for the portion of food she had put aside for herself. Her mind was too uneasy about her husband. Drawing her cloth over her head, she slipped out into the field, intending to run across and have one more look at the grave, now that the workmen had all departed, and before the sightseers began to arrive. As she passed behind the cactus hedge that divided her little pumpkin garden from the field, she caught sight of a form stealing away from the grave. He turned his head and looked at her, and she shuddered, for there was an evil smile upon Runga's face as his eyes met hers. What could he have been about?

'I will sift his villainy to the very bottom!' she said, as she hurried towards the spot. 'Nothing shall escape my eye. I will look into every nook and cranny to see that the wicked Runga has not put any cunning and deadly poison to destroy the life of my husband. Ah, if I can only catch him in his wickedness, I will appeal to the Commissioner himself to have him punished.'

Nellama found nothing but bare walls smooth with freshly plastered mortar. The little room was like a box, and perfectly empty. There could be no room for villainy there, surely, with the midday sun shining down into its moderate depth, illuminating every inch of space. Her fears subsided, and she sat down by the vault determined not to leave it again till Peroo's father arrived. She saw her husband come out of his house and look round for her. But she knew that he did not want her; it is not the thing for a Hindu to be seen chatting with his wife in broad daylight. So she sat there, patiently keeping guard till the appointed hour.

The crowd gathered during the afternoon, and after looking at the grave, the people sat down to chat and watch for the procession. It came from the village with the usual accompaniment of tom-toms and horns, and with apparently the whole village in its wake. It was one of those tropical scenes of colour and light which it is impossible to place upon canvas. The centre figure was that of Peroo, dressed in white and gold, and adorned with garlands of oleander flowers. He was carried on the shoulders of his tribesmen and brother conjurers. The Commissioner and his friends walked apart with a look of amusement and interest on their faces. When they reached the grave they were invited to examine anything they pleased. This they did, and in no cursory manner, for it was a scientific experiment to them of the keenest interest. They found the grave to be nothing but what it professed—namely, a square vault, with unburnt brick walls and floor. Peroo had eaten his usual dinner, cooked for him by his faithful little wife, and his father had given him a drink of some herbal mixture just before starting.

The eyes of all were fixed upon Peroo's father as he commenced the mysterious rite of putting his son to sleep. The chattering of the crowd ceased, and there was a breathless silence.

'What are you doing?' asked the Commissioner.

The man made no secret of it, but readily explained each process.

'See, your honour, I place these small pellets of clay in my son's ears, and these in his nostrils.'

He made some passes, and Peroo showed symptoms at once of mesmeric slumber. Then he turned back the tongue so that it formed a stopping to the throat. One of the Englishmen laid a hand upon the unconscious man's shoulder and shook him, but there was no response. The men who were assisting now began to arrange the body as if for burial; they folded his arms on his breast and straightened out his legs. Apparently life had fled, for there was no respiratory movement, and a yellow tinge crept over the face, replacing the ruddy brown tint of health.

'I don't like that colour,' said one of the visitors, who possessed some medical knowledge. 'It is uncommonly like death.'

He laid his finger upon the man's pulse.

'And I believe he is dead, too,' he continued in evident consternation. 'His pulse has ceased entirely. They have killed him to get the money!'

The Commissioner was startled; no one knew better than he how small a value the Hindu puts upon the human life.

'Wake him!' he cried imperatively.

Peroo's father hesitated.

'My son lives,' he said confidently.

'That may be, but we would see for ourselves,' replied the Englishman in a tone that intimated he meant to be obeyed.

The man was loth to undo his work, for he understood nothing of the fear that influenced the other. However, the Commissioner's will was law. The pellets were removed, the tongue drawn back from the throat, and Peroo began to breathe softly and regularly like a child in its sleep.

'Shall I wake him?' the father asked, waiting for further orders.

'No, you may finish the performance,' said the Commissioner. He was relieved of anxiety and satisfied that the men were acting fairly. The pellets were accordingly replaced, and the body resumed its death-like appearance. Peroo was laid in the vault just as though he were dead, but without the usual signs of mourning which mark the presence of death. Even Nellama's vague fears of evil were allayed, and she watched the preparations for closing the tomb with relief and satisfaction. He would be safe from Runga's malice there, and never a doubt crossed her mind of the power of Peroo to return to life when his father should bid him.

A stone was placed on the mouth of the grave, and the masons mortared it down; soil was spread on the top and sown with corn in rows, so that it would be impossible to disturb it without detection. The Commissioner and his friends watched the process from beginning to end, and were the last to leave the spot, excepting for the faithful Nellama; but she too had to creep away as the night fell.

But all unseen to the watchful eyes of Nellama, on the morning of the fourth day a tiny insect entered the grave. It moved timidly—pausing, hesitating, and making as though it would go back, yet always returning and steadily progressing. With the unerring instinct of its species it advanced until it reached the motionless body. It mounted inch by inch with laborious perseverance, retracing its steps, exploring, feeling, testing with its tiny antennæ, till it came to the closed and sightless eyes. There it stood as motionless as the unconscious man except for the nervous tremor of the antennæ. Suddenly it turned and left the body, making straight for the hole by which it had entered, so cunningly bored through the unburnt brick and the plaster into the soft earth beyond. Hours passed, and nothing moved within the living grave. At midnight two slender horns were pushed through the tunnel, and the pioneer descended the wall on its old track. It had carried its message to the hordes of its clan, and legion upon legion followed in its train. The soul saw it all, and a great agony seized it. It strove to speak; it strove to move that mortal log, through which it was wont to find means for the expression of its emotions and to feel earthly pleasure and pain. One shake of the hand, one thrust of the foot, and the foe with its legions would flee. But the soul was powerless. On streamed the torrent in an ever-increasing flood, till it grew to a vast, seething mass of busy atoms. On, on went the pioneer of the band till once more it stood before the sightless eyes.

Peroo was to lie in his grave till the green blade sprang above it. Both he and his father had expressed their willingness to make that period longer. The old Peroo had been buried from seed-time till harvest, and the younger man had no reason to doubt that his powers were inferior to those of his ancestor. But the Commissioner willed it otherwise. He said that he would be content to have the corn in the green blade—so goes the story. Nellama was counting the days to her husband's release. She had chosen the fowl which was to make his first dish of nourishing mullagatawny. She promised herself that the broth should be strong and good, and enriched with stimulating herb and seed.

On the morning of the appointed day, Runga chanced to pass her in the village street; there was a grim and evil smile upon his face which she did not understand. Why should he smile as his successful rival's hour of triumph drew near? A large crowd gathered to see the opening of the grave. Men with shovels stood ready to remove the earth at the bidding of the Commissioner. But before the order was given, he and his friends fully satisfied themselves that there had been no trickery.

'Neither food nor air can possibly have been introduced, as far as I can see. By all the laws of nature the man ought to be as dead as a red-herring,' said one of the scientific men.

But the Commissioner did not look at all anxious.

'We shall find him alive all right, but rather exhausted, probably. These Hindus undoubtedly know something about this mysterious state called suspended animation,' he replied.

At the given signal the coolies set to work; the stone was bared, the mortar was chipped away, and the heavy slab levered up. The Commissioner himself was the first to descend into the grave, followed quickly by Peroo's father. Nellama, prompted by love and curiosity, pressed forward through the throng, and leaned over to look into her husband's tomb. The air was rent by a terrible shriek; there was a cry of consternation from the Englishmen, and a groan of despair from Peroo's father.

A white skeleton lay at their feet. Peroo had met with the one dread fate that is so much feared by all who practise his art. He had been eaten by ants. No call save the last Great Call on the Judgment Day could ever reclothe his departed soul with flesh.

Bitterly did his young wife blame herself that her eyes had failed to detect the hole so cunningly bored. But detection was impossible, for the fiend who had made it had plugged it with sweetened rice flour, knowing well that no creature on earth but an ant would discover it, and that the discovery would be swift and sure.

FIVE O'CLOCK TEA.

What shall we find when the play is done
At the sign of the Pekoe Tree?
A cup and a welcome for every one,
And a corner for you and me.
A glimpse of æsthetic daintiness,
An air of Bohemian ease, no less,
And a corner for you and me;
Where one may sip and dream if he will,
And fancy the world is standing still,
At the sign of the Pekoe Tree!

Fair Phyllis as well, polite, alert,
We shall find at the Pekoe Tree;
Not over demure, nor yet too pert,
As she waits upon you and me.
Prettily gowned, and daintily neat,
With deft white hands, and a smile discreet,
As she waits upon you and me.
So, please, no excuse. Fagged out or 'fit,'
Or merry, or dull, what matters it—
We can meet at the Pekoe Tree!

J. J. D.

⁂ TO CONTRIBUTORS.

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HIS HIGHNESS'S PLAYTHINGS.

By HEADON HILL,

Author of 'The Rajah's Second Wife,' &c.

CHAPTER I.

'So you find him an apt pupil, Morrison? You think that our new policy is likely to bear fruit?' said the Colonel, in the confident tone of one who expects, or at least hopes for, an affirmative.

'Yes—without reservation—to your first question,' began the reply, promptly enough. 'And yes—in a sense, yes—to your second,' it concluded after a pause just long enough to be significant.

'Confound your Scottish caution! There is something in your mind,' said the Colonel, eyeing his companion askance. 'Why should my second question require a half-hearted, or, let us say, a "hedging" answer?'

'Well, for the matter of that, the changes in the Maharajah's education—the direction of his tastes into fresh channels—have borne fruit already,' said the other. 'There is the fate of Burton's youngster, for instance, and the boat-load of coolies swamped and drowned by his steam-launch, not to speak of the dog-boy he peppered the other day at the quail drive, and sundry other little incidents. Perhaps I was hoping that there would be no more fruits of that kind.'

The eyes of the two men met fair and square this time; those of the last speaker inscrutable and expressionless, while his interrogator's blazed with a mixture of startled inquiry and angry protest, which found vent at last in the exclamation:

'You hint at intention? My dear Morrison, this is too absurd!'

'I have hinted at nothing,' was the reply, 'and I fail to see that the expression of such a hope is absurd.'

Colonel Sadleir was the Political Agent in charge, during the Maharajah's minority, of the ancient native state of Jettore; and Mr Angus Morrison, of the Uncovenanted Civil Service, was the tutor intrusted by the British government with the young prince's education. The conversation was taking place in the veranda of the residency bungalow, and had drifted into its present tenor from a friendly and purely unofficial chat—the sequel of a *tête-à-tête* tiffin.

Seated side by side in long deck-chairs, the pair presented a striking contrast, and yet each was typical in his own way of one or other of the qualities by which India is held—unflinching resolution, and shrewd, far-seeing patience. Colonel Sadleir was a dapper, slightly-built, iron-gray man of fifty, with an obstinate under-jaw and firm unyielding mouth, which, had they not been relieved by thoroughly honest, sympathetic eyes, would assuredly have prevented his thrice-proved success as Resident at the courts of nominally independent native princes. The tutor, ten years or so younger, was built on different lines, being of the large-framed, ungainly order. Yet, lacking all the Colonel's soldierly briskness, and much of his decision of manner, Morrison might well have been taken for the older of the two. He had the true student's stoop, and an introspective air which, in conjunction with natural slowness of speech, would perhaps have given an impression of solemn dullness, had not such been at once put out of court by the massive forehead and deep-set, thoughtful eyes. A man of wide attainments, he had already moulded the character and inspired the tastes of more than one promising ruler; evolving from the raw, zenana-bred article fair semblances of decent gentlemen, and earning for himself the high reputation which had brought him to Jettore.

In Colonel Sadleir's eyes the selection had been more than justified. A year before, when he had penned to the supreme government as urgent an appeal as could be couched in official language to send him a strong man and an able who should come and save his young charge of sixteen from moral ruin, things had been going badly indeed at Jettore. Up to the time of his father's death two years previously, the Maharajah had been brought up entirely among the soul-and-body-destroying influences of the zenana. From that hotbed of vicious enervation Sadleir, as soon as appointed to the care of the state, had promptly extricated him, placing him with an adequate male suite in the royal rooms of the palace, and with an English tutor to superintend his education. Unfortunately the first tutor conceived a mistaken notion of his duties, and, when he had finished the day's lessons in English and French, geography and history, took no heed to, or part in, the boy's recreations. The Political Agent's appeal to Simla was caused by an accidental discovery that these recreations consisted of throwing live goats into a tank of crocodiles and pricking out the eyes of dogs with hot needles. The secret was out. The salient attribute of the Maharajah's character was malignant cruelty in its most hideous form.

To counteract, to restrain, and stamp out this tendency was Angus Morrison's task, and from the day of his arrival he threw himself into it heart and soul. His views as to the means to be employed were entirely in harmony with those of Colonel Sadleir, and were directed at providing healthy and manly substitutes for the degrading diversions in which his charge had found enjoyment. There was no need for economy in the business. Jettore was a rich state with a full treasury, and no expense was spared to supply the young prince with the most costly amusements, so long as they were those in which a gentleman might indulge. He was taught to ride and shoot; a steam-launch was imported in which he could navigate the river that ran past the city; a miniature real railway, with a complete train of engine and carriages, was constructed in the palace grounds; and he was instructed in all the technicalities of his new toys so that he might handle them practically himself.

After this there was no more demand for live goats and pariah dogs for the palace at Jettore. The steam-launch, the shooting excursions, and the railway– they were not introduced all at once, but at intervals—opened up a new world of delight to the young Maharajah, and so readily did he assimilate knowledge that he mastered the technicalities of each in turn with wonderful rapidity. He became a keen shot, a fairly good horseman, a proficient engine-driver and pointsman, and a skilful steersman. Morrison devoted more attention to humouring an interest in these things than to regular 'lessons,' and spent much of his time in the young prince's company, encouraging him also to prefer European society generally to that of his own *entourage*. The Maharajah had always been accorded the run of the residency, but under the first tutor's régime he had hardly ever availed himself of it. Now, however, he came over from the palace frequently, and Mrs Sadleir was fast shaking off the horror with which his former practices had inspired her. Even Bessie, the fourteen-year-old daughter of the house, who had come out from England a few months before full of ready-made loathing for one whom she had heard of as a monster, was beginning to appear outwardly reconciled to him, and at least tolerated his presence.

Unhappily the otherwise beneficent change in the Maharajah's tastes had been attended by a series of accidents, entailing the loss of more valuable lives than those of his previous dumb victims. It was now nearly a year since the steam-launch, steered by the young prince in person, had run down and sunk a boat-load of coolies returning from the opposite bank of the river. Despite all efforts, in which the Maharajah joined, six of the coolies were drowned. Then again, six months later, the little son of the European engine-driver who had been engaged to look after the miniature railway met with a terrible death on the private line in the palace grounds. This accident was the more deplorable because the father, Burton, was himself driving the locomotive, and ran over his child through mistaking the signals which the Maharajah was manipulating. And now, within the last few days, the Maharajah's gun had gone off prematurely, nearly tearing the thigh from a boy who had the dogs in leash.

'I really must press you, Morrison,' rejoined Colonel Sadleir, after a pause. 'I know you well enough to be sure that there is something in your mind, only you don't think it fair to speak out without proof. That is it, isn't it?'

'It certainly would not suit me to make an accusation which I could not substantiate,' said Morrison slowly. 'I am quite unable to substantiate anything. But,' with a momentary flash of meaning, 'I do not wish to prevent you from drawing your own inferences.'

The Colonel seemed to understand, and sat for some seconds without speaking.

'An undefined suspicion, eh?' he said at length. 'Well, even that, coming from you, is worthy of respect. And yet, good Heavens!' he continued hotly, 'apart from the collapse of our system, it would be too horrible. It would mean that we had to deal with a human fiend; and we had begun to think him something better than that—that his faults were the result of zenana up-bringing, and therefore curable. You formed that opinion yourself, I believe?'

'I have been trying to,' replied Morrison. 'But it never reached that stage—never got beyond a hope. I do not rapidly arrive at conclusions, and I have not come to a definite one in this case yet. I am waiting—for the next "accident."'

'The electric light installation, and electricity generally, is his latest craze,' said Colonel Sadleir. 'There is very little scope for an "accident" in that line, is there?'

'It would be difficult, and would require a good deal more knowledge than has been acquired yet,' said Morrison. 'Still, it would be possible eventually. I mean to keep my eye on the dynamos and connections when the time comes. Very little progress has been made yet, and—— How do you do, Miss Bessie? You look as if Jettore agreed with you.'

The interruption was caused by the sudden appearance of a young girl, who stepped on to the veranda from the room outside of which they were sitting. She had a firm little mouth, and pleasant eyes which were the counterparts of those which greeted her from the depths of the Colonel's chair. A taking child rather than a pretty one, and flushed just now with the traces of some excitement.

'Why, Bessie!' said her father, as she came forward and shook hands with Morrison, 'you are back early from the Snelgar's. The doctor's tiffin party must have been a very brief function. Has mother come home too?'

'Yes,' was the reply; 'Doctor Snelgar thinks we are going to have a thunder-storm, so mother insisted on coming away before it began. You know how nervous she is. I have just been talking to Burton, father. We met him in the compound as we came in, and he is as depressed and miserable as ever.'

'Poor fellow!' said the Colonel.

'Yes, and his trouble has been opened afresh by a discovery he has made,' said Bessie, seating herself on the arm of Sadleir's chair. 'He has found a bolt-screw, I think he called it, belonging to the signal apparatus, lying under a prickly-pear bush in the palace garden. You know he always contended that the signal was at "safety," whereas the Maharajah maintained that he had pulled the "danger" lever, and so blocked the line on which little Willie was playing round the curve. The state of the lever after the accident seemed to prove that His Highness was right, and that it was all Burton's own fault through mistaking the signal. But the finding of this broken bolt-screw shows, Burton says, that they may both have been right—that the danger lever may have been pulled down, and that the signal-arm may yet have remained at safety long enough, before it acted, to cause the accident, provided the bolt had been removed beforehand.'

'But the signal has been working properly ever since. How is that accounted for, if the bolt has been missing?' said Colonel Sadleir.

'There was a duplicate set of fittings supplied with the apparatus,' Morrison suggested.

'That was just it,' exclaimed Bessie. 'On finding the broken bolt, Burton went to the engine shed where he keeps these things, and sure enough the duplicate bolt was gone. Of course he cannot tell when the signal was tampered with, but there is no doubt that at some time or other some one removed the old bolt and, having broken it in doing so, substituted the duplicate.'

'If the tampering took place at the time of the boy's death, the new bolt must have been put into the apparatus within a few minutes of the accident, or the absence of one would have been discovered,' remarked the Colonel thoughtfully. 'I remember the conflicting statements of the Maharajah and Burton led to an immediate examination of the signals.' And the eyes of the two men met, this time, in a glance of mutual intelligence.

'That is just what Burton says, father,' began Bessie eagerly; 'and yet there was no one near the spot but'——

'His Highness the Maharajah Sahib!' announced a *khitmutghar*, coming on to the veranda from one of the further windows, followed by a corpulent, rather undersized youth in white tunic and elaborately jewelled turban. Bessie jumped down from her perch and disappeared into the house, her face clouding quickly, while the political agent and the tutor rose to greet the visitor. He was fairish for a Hindu, but he made up for any national deficiency in his complexion with a sleepy smile, heavy-lidded, beady eyes, baggy cheeks, and a fat double chin. The *khitmutghar* brought him a chair, and he seated himself between the Colonel and Morrison.

'Miss Bessie ran away,' he remarked, smoothing one podgy hand over the other, perhaps nervously. 'She look cross at me; but never mind. The electric light installation soon be finish now. Then I show her, and she come back to good temper again.'

Colonel Sadleir's recollection took him back to the Mutiny. He thanked God that these were not troublous times, for both he and his wife had noticed signs and tokens that if His Highness of Jettore had a care for any one but himself, it was for the self-possessed little maiden who would have none of him. But the Colonel had not won his spurs in diplomacy by allowing the members of his family to ruffle native dignitaries, so he said:

'Miss Bessie was not looking cross at you, Maharajah Sahib. She was feeling sad because she has been talking to your engine-driver, Burton, about the accident.'

The young prince's eyes goggled from one to the other, though he did not move his head. 'Ah! I see,' he said. 'He has been telling her about the bolt-screw he say he find. What you think of that for a yarn, Colonel Sahib?' The late tutor had been a young Oxford man addicted to slang.

'I think the whole thing is very mysterious,' was the best answer the Political Agent could find.

THE MECCAN PILGRIMAGE.

THE outrage at Jeddah, by which the British vice-consul lost his life, and serious injury befell the British, French, and Russian consuls, was probably the outcome of late attempts on the part of European governments (acting through the Turkish authorities) to sanify Jeddah and its vicinity, to furnish a better water-supply, and to introduce measures for lessening the risk of spreading cholera and other diseases, on the return of pilgrims from Arabia to Egypt, Turkey, and southern Russia. Such measures are looked upon by Moslem fanatics as interference with the Meccan pilgrimage, and they resent it accordingly.

What is the Meccan pilgrimage? Ages before Mohammed, people flocked annually to

Mecca to worship at the Káaba, and to adore the sacred Black Stone. The Arabian prophet saw that this custom was too firmly grounded to be upset, and he grafted it on to his 'ism,' so that the pilgrims who have gone to Mecca for the last twelve hundred years, and those who go now, have been, and are Mohammedans. Mohammed forbade the use of alcohol and swine's flesh. He enjoined fasting, praying five times per day, frequent ablutions, and *made of pilgrimage a religious duty.*

Every Moslem who is in health and circumstances which will permit him to perform the journey, is under compulsion to visit Mecca once, at least, in his lifetime. Having performed it, he is a Hadji, a pious person, and is considered safe for paradise.

Very extended efforts and arrangements are made over a large part of the earth's surface every year to carry out the pilgrimage. The conveyance of pilgrims to and from the sacred places, together with providing for their sustentation while there, is a considerable branch of commerce, in which great numbers of ships are engaged, and much capital invested.

Of late years the number of pilgrims has vastly increased, owing to the facilities afforded by owners of steamers, by which passengers are conveyed for one-tenth of what it formerly cost to travel by camel-caravan and sailing-craft. For instance, from Suez to Jeddah crowds are taken by steamer at a fare of about half-a-crown each, the passengers providing their own food. At the time Burckhardt was in Mecca (1813-1814) the number visiting the shrines was under ten thousand per annum, but it is probable that the war then being waged by the Turks against the Wahâbis lessened the number. In 1873 Mr Wilfrid Scawen Blunt stated the number at under one hundred thousand, whilst in 1893 it has risen to between three hundred thousand and four hundred thousand (according to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, May 1895). Pilgrims travel from all parts of the Moslem world, from Morocco in the west, from China in the east, from all parts of the Malay Archipelago, and from India. Great numbers go from Egypt, and also from the African coast of the Red Sea (that is, from Nubia, the Soudan, &c.). Persia sends a large contingent by steamer down the Persian Gulf, as well as by camel-caravans right across Arabia. From Khiva and far-distant Bokhara men travel painfully across the Asiatic deserts, taking a whole year to perform the double journey.

From many parts of the vast territory of Arabia itself the same process goes on, whilst from Turkey a camel-caravan sets forth, passing through Asia Minor to Damascus, at which place it rests for a fortnight; and then, being joined by other caravans, it starts on its long journey to Mecca, crossing the great Syrian desert, and taking some six weeks on the way. This gigantic caravan consisted in 1893 of no less than fifteen thousand camels. Travelling takes place mostly during the night, it being cooler for the pilgrims, and besides that, the camels feed better in day-light. Every fifth day a halt for a complete twenty-four hours is made, in order to rest the camels, and to prevent serious results to them from the chafing of the saddles and heavy burdens which they carry. Even with this care many of them knock up, and are abandoned. Many pilgrims are taken ill on the way, and some die. This Damascus caravan must be a marvellous sight, with its fifteen thousand camels, moving along in strings miles in length; and terribly fatiguing work the travelling must be, with the heat, the dust, the offensive smells, the trying motion of the 'ships of the desert,' and the scarce and bad water; all these must go a long way toward upsetting even the strongest of men, more especially as the strain lasts for so long a time. Sir Richard Burton, a man in the prime of life, joined this caravan at Medina in 1853, and went on with it to Mecca, taking eleven days on the journey, but he found the strain quite as much as he could stand. Until a few years ago a similar caravan travelled from Morocco, right along the northern coast of Africa, through Algeria, Tunis, and Tripoli, to Egypt, and there joined the Cairo caravan, the whole gigantic affair then going on *viâ* Suez, striking across the northern part of the Sinaitic peninsula, and down through the desert to Medina, and on to Mecca. The Morocco and North African pilgrims now voyage per steamer through the Suez Canal to Jeddah, and for the last year or two the Egyptian pilgrims have gone from Suez by steamer to the same port.

It goes without saying that the crowding at Jeddah and the sacred places is necessarily excessive. Epidemics are frequent, and the mortality fearful. It has been found impossible to enforce sanitary regulations, or to ensure a sufficient supply of good water for the extraordinary demand.

The Sanitary Commissions which have been appointed have failed to do much, if any good. They have found it impossible to cope with the enormous difficulties which beset them, or with the ignorance and prejudices of half-crazy fanatics, who are careless as to whether they live or die. Those who die are buried—after a fashion—that is to say, very carelessly, with the result that the air is rendered noisome, and the water-supply is polluted. The proceedings in this regard are awful. The number of pilgrims who die in their holy land varies of course. Sometimes thousands land who never re-embark. In 1893 there were landed at the port of Yembo (for Medina) some eight thousand odd, of whom only about five thousand were reshipped.

Painful as all this is to contemplate, there seems no prospect of a change for the better: crowds of fanatics cannot be controlled by reason. But so long as nothing can be done, a terrible danger exists for every country to which pilgrims return, and indeed for others also. Cholera in Egypt, Asia Minor, or Turkey is a danger for all Europe, and of this fact the governments of Europe and the medical faculty are only too well aware.

From Jeddah 'the faithful' have to make their way some fifty to sixty miles through a desolate, dried-up, sandy and rocky country to Mecca. Those who can afford to do so ride on camels and donkeys, whilst the impecunious walk. Every devotee must, on approaching

Mecca, have his head shaven, put away his usual clothing, and put on an *imahl*, which is a garment very near akin to a thin cotton shirt. In this thin raiment wearers suffer much from cold if the time happens to be winter. It is very cold even in Arabia in December, January, and February, and as the ceremony shifts fourteen days yearly, it takes place at all times of the year. Many pilgrims owe their deaths to wearing nothing but the imahl in severe weather.

The sherif of Mecca is in all likelihood the only man who knows how many devotees visit that city, for he levies a stiff toll on every one, and makes a very handsome income out of the business.

There are many other men who prosper in Mecca. Hundreds act as guides, philosophers, and kind friends to the bewildered pilgrims—for a consideration. They show them where to kneel in the great mosque, where to pray, where to repeat certain parts of the Koran—in fact they utter the words, and their pupils follow suit. These people are naturally opposed to all innovations, and so also are the purveyors of food, which is excessively dear during the pilgrimage.

Every year the Sultan of Turkey sends a magnificent carpet, costing twelve hundred pounds, for use in the great mosque. This carpet is carried all the way from Turkey on the finest and strongest camel that can be procured.

The Khedive of Egypt sends a like costly carpet every year. In each case the camel which bears the gift is called the 'mahmal,' and is looked upon as a sacred animal. Now the sherif of Mecca has the right of disposing of the old carpets, which are cut up, the pieces being sold as sacred relics at smart prices. The pilgrim who can afford to purchase a piece to take home considers himself a fortunate man. In this and other ways the faithful and simple are exploited.

The actual religious ceremonies occupy only five days, of which two are devoted to worship in or near the mosque. The crowding is as a matter of course fearful, and in summer time the heat is stifling and overbearing. One day is devoted to a visit to the Hill of Arafat, some miles from the town, the object of the journey being to listen to a sermon by one or more moollahs. The sermon is long, and one moollah is sometimes unable to sustain the effort of preaching in the open air to a vast multitude for the prescribed time. The preachers stand on the top of the hill, and the audience ought to stand on the hill slopes. This was probably done in former times, but the crowd is now too large to find standing room on the hill; and the result is that the people stand, sit, or lie about over a large expanse of plain, not one in ten, or one in a hundred, hearing a word of the sermon. The truth seems to be that the excursion to the Hill of Arafat has degenerated into a rowdy and disgraceful proceeding, in which talking, laughing, joking, and flirting go on whilst the sermon is being preached. When the preaching is over a general rush back begins, and of late years it has been very dangerous. At one part of the way the road is narrow, and is hemmed in on either side by steep and lofty rocks. Through this narrow pass the enormous crowd has to make its way, and the consequence is that limbs and lives are put in jeopardy. Last year thirty persons were crushed to death in this rocky pass.

On another of the five days, a very curious and grotesque performance takes place, called 'stoning the devil.' Each person must provide himself with a certain number of stones, which he must wash, and then throw at a stone effigy of the prince of darkness. This is also a dangerous occupation, owing to the crush. Broken limbs, gouged-out eyes, and fatal results are quite common occurrences.

Another day is given to the wholesale slaughter of sheep. It is probable that originally (that is, before Mohammed's day) a few sheep were sacrificed to the gods, as was common among many oriental peoples; but in the year 1893 no fewer than twenty thousand sheep were slain, and the valley became one vast and disgusting slaughter-house. No decency was observed. The viscera, offal, and a good part of the flesh were left scattered about, sending up their noisome effluvia for weeks. Camels, goats, and oxen are also slaughtered.

The holy well of Zem-zem disputes with the Black Stone built into the wall of the Káaba the honour of being the most sacred thing in Mecca; and some authorities hold that it, rather than the Black Stone, is the original cause of Mecca's becoming a holy place in the eyes of the old heathen Arab tribesmen. Its perennial supply is a specialty, and as the water is slightly brackish, containing several alkaline constituents, it may rank as a mildly aperient mineral spring. One of the chief duties and privileges of the pilgrims is to drink, to drink often, and as much as they possibly can, of the holy water. It has of late been assumed that the holy well is itself a source of infection, and a deadly centre for the distribution of cholera poison. But Dr Snouck Hurgronje, who spent six months in Mecca in 1885 in the successful guise of a pilgrim, zealously denies this. From an analysis of the water, as well as from consideration of the soil, climate, situation, and sanitary arrangements (such as they are!) of Mecca, expounded in a paper read to the Geographical Society of Berlin in 1887, he argues that no dangerous organic poison, still less the cholera bacillus, is present in the water. And though the sacred enclosure, like the rest of the narrow valley in which Mecca stands, is liable, on the rare occasions when heavy rain falls there and on the hills around, to be partially flooded for a time, he holds that the high and solid wall of masonry round the mouth of the well is sufficient to prevent contamination by surface water. Further, the pilgrims, clean or unclean, have *never* direct access to the well; only the established officials attached to the well are entitled at any time to draw its water, and this they give to the pilgrims for a duly exacted fee.

When the religious ceremonies are ended, the proceedings take the form of a fair, for business and for pleasure, whereat the most extravagant debauchery and the wildest orgies prevail. Probably no gathering together of mankind in the world exceeds this one in that way, and it is stated that steady-going, respectable, and well-meaning pilgrims are scandalised by what they witness, and return home thoroughly disenchanted, so widely different are the realities of the pilgrimage from what they had pictured to themselves beforehand. Burckhardt and Sir Richard Burton agree in saying that Mecca is one of the most vicious cities of the world—an opinion not confined to Christians.

The monstrous yearly Meccan pilgrimage goes on (and probably will go on) growing in magnitude. There is no power which can stop it. To attempt to interfere with it would provoke the whole Moslem world into revolt, and bring about a jehad or holy war. The Turkish government is sorely put to it to maintain even the imperfect order now existing. It is not unlikely that, even if some terrible catastrophe were some day to destroy a large part of the assembled multitude, it is not in the nature of things that the crowd would be any smaller the year after, so little amenable to reason are men when actuated by fanaticism.

Medina, the burial-place of Mohammed, is one of the sacred places; but though it is considered an act of piety to visit Medina, and worship in the mosque wherein the dust of the prophet is supposed to lie, it is not looked upon as of the same importance as pilgrimage to Mecca.

Since the above was written, the government of India has prepared a measure which it may be hoped will go a long way toward improving sanitary conditions as far as Jeddah is concerned. The upper deck of every pilgrim ship leaving Indian ports is to be kept free for pilgrims, their goods and chattels being transferred to the hold. All pilgrims are to be inspected by qualified persons prior to embarking, and there are to be proper hospital arrangements on board, whilst the space per head is to be considerably increased. This will naturally result in greater cost of transit, but it is the demand of all the European powers, including Turkey. The Turkish government requires security that it shall be paid the heavy expenses of the lazaretto off Jeddah, and the cost of sanifying processes in the town. It is proposed to include such cost in the price of the pilgrims' tickets, each of whom will have to pay about twenty-five shillings extra.

These proposed regulations under the new Pilgrim Ship Bill have been received with strong disfavour by most Indian Mussulmans. In a memorial to the Viceroy from the Mussulmans of Bombay, it was pointed out that raising the cost will prove prohibitive to many. Disease is most likely to be disseminated by the neglect of sanitary precautions by the Turkish authorities. The Indian government has previously legislated for the health of pilgrims till they reach Arabian ports, while the Turkish government has done nothing, and the sanitation of their ships is not equal to that on Indian vessels.

Excellent as is the measure of the Indian government, it will not, as a matter of course, touch the caravan traffic from Persia, Turkestan, and other Asiatic countries. With a rigid quarantine at Jeddah, and a strongly backed-up medical police in that port, the danger there will be greatly lessened. If the insanitary horrors at Mecca could be dealt with in a similar way, there would be far less likelihood of cholera spreading from that centre.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

By G. Manville Fenn.

CHAPTER XXIX.—THE RENDEZVOUS.

'But, my dearest Renée, you must see her,' said Miss Bryne. 'This is very wrong of you. You are verging, my dear, really.'

'Aunt dear, I can't play the hypocrite. Isabel has, I feel sure, been playing a double part.'

'Oh no, no, my dear; she is so young, such a child—well, I might say so innocent—*La Belle Sauvage*.'

'I cannot think of her as you do, aunt dear. You like her.'

'Of course, my dear.'

'Well, there, aunt, if you wish it, I will come and see her.'

'That is right, my dear; and I'm sure you will feel more satisfied when you come to know her as I do.'

Miss Bryne kissed her niece affectionately, and they went together into the little drawing-room, where Isabel Endoza sprang from her seat to embrace Renée with the greatest effusiveness.

'My own sweet,' she whispered, 'my heart bleeds to see you still so pale and worn.'

'My darling!' cooed Miss Bryne, as the visitor turned to her, looking flushed, and extremely attractive. 'Why, you are lovely this morning in this sweet simple costume. Those yellow roses too, how they do accord with your dark hair, and what a delicious scent! It must be quite new.'

Isabel laughed nervously as Miss Bryne kissed her and then held her at arm's length.

'Oh, Miss Bryne,' she cried, 'you shouldn't. It is what you English people call spoiling me. You will make me vain.'

'No, my dear, you are too wise and good; and I know you are losing a great many of your foreign ways, and are growing into a beautiful little English lady.'

'Am I?' said the girl innocently. 'Oh, I do wish dearest Renée would think of me like that. You don't, do you, Renée dear?'

'I am afraid my aunt flatters us both too much,' said Renée coldly.

'Yes, I am sure she does,' cried the girl. 'No; I mean me. She could not spoil you, Renée; you are so wise and good and different from other people. But, Renée dearest, have I offended you in any way?'

'Oh no, my child,' cried Miss Bryne. 'What nonsense!'

'I fancy sometimes she is quite cold to me,' said Isabel rather piteously; 'and it does hurt me so when I try to make people love me.'

'We do love you, my dear,' said Miss Bryne hurriedly. 'You forget that dearest Renée has suffered so much lately, and it has made her seem changed.'

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'Yes,' cried Isabel, springing from her seat to go down on her knees by Rénée, and impulsively catch her hand to hold to her cheek, while she looked up at her with her beautiful great dark eyes wearing a spaniel-like look of reverence. 'I do forget all that sometimes. I am so different from you English girls. I am always with papa, and I get mixed up with his diplomacy and politics, and it all makes me seem strange.'

'Oh no, my darling, not strange,' cried Miss Bryne. 'That is exaggerating; now you are verging; you are indeed, my darling.'

'Am I?' said Isabel, with the tears now filling her eyes. 'I—I don't want to. I want you both to love me always very dearly.'

'As we will, my darling,' said Miss Bryne, crossing to bend over her caressingly.

'But you—you, Rénée, dear,' cried Isabel, clinging to her hand.

'I will try always to be your friend, Isabel,' said Rénée, with her brow wrinkling with perplexity.

'But that isn't loving me, dear.'

'Well, then, I will try to love you—and forgive,' she sighed to herself.

'But it doesn't want any trying to make me love you, dear,' cried the girl piteously. 'I'm afraid papa is not so fond of me now as he used to be.'

'Ah, fie—fie! my love,' cried Miss Bryne reprovingly. 'I have often watched him, and seen how he idolises you. Count Villar Endoza is too great and good a man not to be devotedly attached to his child. There, there, there, you must not cry. And mind too, you are going to crush that pretty bonnet. Come and sit down now by me.'

'No; I want to stay by dearest Rénée; she says she is going to try and love me, and it is so delightful to be here once more. You won't come for a drive, will you, Rénée, dear?' she cried excitedly.

'No; pray excuse me this morning.'

'The brougham is waiting. Never mind; let it wait. I like being here best.'

'She does not ask me to go for a drive with her,' sighed Miss Bryne to herself. 'Never mind: some day.'

'There, let me kneel here by you, Rénée. I want to talk to you.'

Rénée noticed that her visitor seemed excited. The next minute she felt that she had divined the cause.

'Let me see,' cried the girl quickly, and Miss Bryne noticed how the colour came and went in her cheeks—'have I any news to tell you? No—yes, I have. You both know Mr Wynyan.'

Rénée's face twitched, but otherwise she remained unmoved.

'Yes, we know Mr Wynyan,' said Miss Bryne coldly.

'Why of course! How silly I am!' cried Isabel. 'Papa has been a good deal in communication with him lately.'

'Indeed, my dear.'

'Yes,' said the girl, answering Miss Bryne, but talking with her head partly turned to Rénée. 'Papa wishes him to go out to Deconcagua to take the management of some great engineering works.'

'And is he going?' said Miss Bryne, with a furtive look at Rénée's pale face.

'Oh yes, I think so. It will be such a great thing for him, a hundred times better than his staying here.'

'Poor Rénée!' thought Miss Bryne.

'Papa thinks so much of Mr Wynyan, and of course I like him very very much.'

An awkward silence was impending, but just then there was a diversion. The arrival of a visitor had not been noticed till the door was opened, and the servant announced Mr Brant, at the mention of whose name Isabel started to her feet, as if ashamed of being caught in such a position.

'Morning,' cried Brant. 'This is a surprise. How are you, Miss Endoza? How do, Rénée? Well, auntie, all right?' Then without waiting for replies, he continued: 'Why, Miss Endoza, one does not often see you here now.'

'No, no,' said Isabel, avoiding his eyes, 'not very often, Mr Dalton. But—but I am obliged to come and see dear Rénée sometimes.'

'Of course, so am I, and auntie here, too.'

'But you'll excuse me now, won't you, Rénée dearest? I think I'll go now.'

'Oh, I say, don't let me drive you away.'

'Oh no: don't think that, Mr Brant, please,' said the girl with a troubled look. 'I—I must go now. Good-bye, Miss Bryne dear,' she cried, kissing her affectionately. 'Do come and see me soon.'

'Of course I will, my dearest; as soon as ever I can persuade Rénée.'

'Yes, do, please. And you will too, Rénée, love. I do so want you to come to me.'

'Wait,' said Rénée coldly; and she submitted to the effusive kisses of her visitor, feeling anger against herself, as she thought how earnest they were, and saw the genuine tears in the girl's eyes, as she turned to offer her hand to Brant.

'Good-bye, Mr Dalton,' she said in a half-choking voice.

'Wait a moment,' he said. 'I'll see you down to the carriage.'

'Oh no; don't let me drag you away,' said Isabel, with a mocking look.

'Why not? I'm idle now. Only just dropped in here for a bit. Why, it's like old times having to see you down.'

They passed out, and Miss Bryne stood gazing after them with a smile on her lips.

'There, Rénée, my child,' she cried enthusiastically; 'what have I always told you? Poor child! she is affection itself, and loves you dearly.'

'Yes, aunt,' said Rénée sadly; 'but I cannot feel towards her as you do.'

'I know—I know, my darling,' whispered Miss Bryne tenderly; 'but we cannot rule these things. There, dearest, it is woman's fate to suffer. Let us only hope that all things are for the best, and that he will prove worthy of her. Did you notice how she changed colour when she mentioned his name?'

Rénée was silent, and Miss Bryne bent down, kissed her forehead, and feeling that she had made a mistake in her allusion, wisely held her tongue and went off to her work-table; while

Renée picked up a book, and opened it to sit and think.

'Do you think Brant had come to talk about the business, aunt—that trouble there?'

'My dearest Renée, don't; pray don't drag up that dreadful affair.'

'Why not, aunt?'

'Because these terrible things settle themselves best without poor weak women interfering. There, let it all go, my dear, and let's cease to worry. Everything will come right, you'll see—Mr Wynyan!'

CHAPTER XXX.—MENTAL DUST.

Renée started from her seat as the servant announced the engineer's name like an echo of Miss Bryne's ejaculation, and Wynyan entered, looking very stern and intent, as he glanced from one to the other, waiting for the servant's departure before he spoke.

Renée stood cold and statuesque, with her head erect, but eyes lowered, making no sign of welcome, while Miss Bryne took her cue from her niece, tried to look dignified, failed utterly, and uttered a feeble 'Good-morning.'

'Good-morning,' said Wynyan, who felt the blood rush to his brain in his resentment, as he saw Renée's proud, disdainful look, so ill deserved at such a time. 'I am sorry to intrude upon you, but I came upon business of vital importance—to the firm, Miss Dalton.'

Renée bowed coldly, but without glancing at him, for like a flash a painful suspicion had entered her mind, making her brow begin to knit; and a feeling of angry bitterness against herself for her weakness increased until it could hardly be borne.

'I have just come from Great George Street, after a visit to your cousin's chambers. I learned at the offices that the messenger who came this morning with a note to you from Mr Hamber saw him enter the house.'

Renée bowed coldly, and after glancing at both, Miss Bryne said weakly: 'Yes, Mr Wynyan, my nephew came here this morning.'

'Hah!' ejaculated Wynyan, with a sigh of relief. 'Kindly send word to him that I must see him directly. If he saw me come, and has left the room to avoid me, pray tell him, for Heaven's sake, that all differences that have existed between us must be at an end—that I have been to the Government offices this morning—had an interview with the under-secretary. Excuse me, Miss Dalton, for entering into this detail, but I am working in the interest of the firm, and I fear that after what has passed, your cousin will decline to see me.'

'But Mr Brant Dalton cannot see you, Mr Wynyan,' said Miss Bryne, while Renée stood with a singing noise in her ears, hardly hearing the words about the business, for the emotion caused by Wynyan's presence, and the recollection that by a strange coincidence—no, no coincidences—a cruel arrangement, Isabel Endoza and Mr Paul Wynyan should have met at her house.

'Miss Bryne,' cried Wynyan imploringly, 'I fully expected this; but let me beg of you, for his and your niece's sake, to see him, and persuade him to discuss this painful affair with me. I cannot act alone—I have no right—but the Government officials are ready to listen to our explanations, and to join with us in discovering the offender who broke faith with them; if necessary, to go as far, perhaps, as to forgive, if we can prove to them that the invention will be useless to a foreign power. Now,' he continued earnestly, 'I am in a position to prove all this; but I cannot act alone. I have no claim upon the firm—no rights. I am,' he continued bitterly, 'nothing but a discharged servant.—But, believe me, Miss Dalton, I venerated your father, and I would do anything sooner than this great, this ruinous trouble should rest upon your credit.'

'It is very good and nice of you, Mr Wynyan,' said Miss Bryne feebly, after waiting for her niece to speak, 'but Mr Brant Dalton is not here.'

'And I tell you, madam, that this is on a piece with Brant Dalton's cowardly malignance toward one who is fighting for him. He will not see me.'

'Mr Wynyan,' said Miss Bryne indignantly, 'really you are verging.'

'I cannot help it, madam,' cried the engineer angrily. 'I know what he would say.—Miss Dalton, I appeal to you. I tell you that my poor old friend's business is in peril. I appeal to you as his child to try to save it. I know your opinion of me, but I wait, knowing that some day the truth will prevail. That is nothing now. I only ask you, for your own sake, to go and fetch your cousin to me.'

Renée looked at him now, with her eyes flashing with indignation. What was the business or its fruits to her now? What the honour of the firm? Her breast was filled with but one emotion: rage against this man, contempt for herself that she could ever have felt love for one who was full of subterfuge and falsity. Brant must be right: he was not to be trusted, and he had—she was convinced then in her blind passion—come there to meet Isabel.

'You hear me, madam,' he said. 'There is no time to spare.'

'My cousin is not here, sir,' she said scornfully; and then with a feeling that had she been dying she must have launched the sting at him with its weak, pitiful poison: 'He was here a short time back, but he left with your betrothed, and has not returned.'

The moment she had uttered the words, she would have given life itself to have recalled them, feeling, when once uttered, how contemptible she must look in his eyes; and then her pale face flamed up scarlet, as he uttered a low laugh, and gazed at her, not in anger, but with a half-pitying look, full of reproach.

'My betrothed!' he said gently. 'But there, I cannot waste time. Listen to me, please, both of you. Brant Dalton has gone from here with Miss Endoza. Has he gone, do you think, to the Count's?'

'I—I do not know,' faltered Miss Bryne. 'I think not. I fancied he would come back.'

'Thank you,' said Wynyan quietly. 'I will go there.—But before I go, Miss Dalton, will you help me by telling me anything you know that will assist me in finding him?'

There was a change in Renée's manner as she looked at the speaker now.

'No,' she said quickly. 'I do not often see my cousin now.'

'Indeed?' he said, looking at her wonderingly. 'Well, I must ask you to help me, Miss Dalton. If he returns here, be good enough to tell him what I have said, and use your influence to get him to come on to me at the offices. If I am not there, I shall have left a message saying where I may be found.'

He turned to go, but was checked by the entrance of the servant, who announced Count Villar Endoza and Mr Levvinson.

The Count entered, looking haggard and excited. Levvinson was close behind, and the two men gazed sharply at Wynyan, who was passing out when Levvinson spoke a few words in an undertone to his companion.

'Yes, exactly,' cried Endoza ; and he turned to Wynyan.—'Have the goodness to stay a few moments, sir,' he said haughtily.

'I do not know by what authority you order me, sir,' replied the young man, 'but I will stay. Tell me first, though : has Mr Brant Dalton gone on to your house?'

'Then he—has he been here?' cried Endoza, turning to Renée.

'My cousin was here a short time back.'

Levvinson looked sharply at Endoza, and gave him a meaning nod, which made him turn away angrily ; and, without paying the slightest heed to Miss Bryne, who was trying to catch his eye, he turned to Renée.

'I beg pardon for calling at this unusual hour, Miss Dalton,' he said, courteously ; 'but would you mind telling me—answering me a question or two?'

'Oh yes, of course, my niece will, Count,' cried Miss Bryne. 'Pray speak; is—is—anything wrong?'

Endoza paid not the slightest heed to her words, but fixed his eyes on Renée.

'You have not gone out, then, this morning?'

'I? No,' said Renée quietly.

'But my daughter--Isabel—received a note from you asking her to come over'——

'No; I have not written to her for some time past,' replied Renée.

'Then she has not been here?' said Endoza excitedly ; and Wynyan saw that Levvinson craned forward his head to catch the reply.

'Yes, oh yes, the dear child came here, Count,' cried Miss Bryne eagerly.

'Will you be silent, madam ! I am speaking to this lady,' cried the Count fiercely ; and Miss Bryne turned pale, and looked feebly from one to the other.

'My aunt is quite right,' said Renee, rather sternly, and she took the trembling woman's hand. 'Miss Endoza came here about an hour ago, visiting me, but not upon my invitation.'

'You see,' said Levvinson with a peculiar smile, such as a man might wear to hide intense suffering.

'Thank you,' said the Count. 'Will you tell me how and when she went?'

'She stayed some time and then went down to her carriage, I believe.'

'Alone?' cried Levvinson in a harsh, cracked voice.

Renée looked at him wonderingly, asking herself who was this stranger who questioned her.

'No : my cousin saw her down to her carriage,' said Renée distantly.

'Am I a fool now?' cried Levvinson furiously, as he caught the Count by the arm. 'You see? Every bit of it planned.'

'Silence, man !' cried the Count sternly.

'Silence? No,' cried Levvinson ; 'you will find me hard to silence. Well, are you going to stand there in that idiotic manner while they are perhaps on the way to Dover? Or have you had a hand in it—a fresh piece of diplomacy?'

The Count wrenched his arm away, and, black now with fury, turned to find that Miss Bryne had raised her hand to touch his arm.

'Pray, pray tell me,' she whispered. 'Isabel—is anything wrong?'

'Will some one keep this cursed woman away !' roared the Count excitedly.—'Come on quickly,' he whispered to Levvinson : 'we may overtake them yet.'

'If we go at once,' said Levvinson coldly. 'I sent a message on as soon as I believed it was so.'

'You?—sent a message?' cried the Count, who was half-way to the door.

'Of course. As soon as my man brought me the news. I have had him watched for days.'

'What ! You had him watched?'

'Yes, and the lady, too. I had begun to have my doubts.'

The Count uttered an oath in his own tongue, and passed out, closely followed by Levvinson, while Miss Bryne uttered a piercing cry, and fell back upon the carpet.

Renée ran to her, and caught her hands, then dropped them, and turned to Wynyan, who took a step or two to assist the hysterical sufferer, lifting her easily and laying her upon the couch.

'Don't be alarmed,' he said quietly. 'A little cold water, and she will soon come round.—One moment, Miss Dalton. You are, it seems, to be alone. Will you give me your authority to apply directly to your father's solicitors to take charge at once of the business and your affairs?'

'I—I do not know what it all means, Mr Wynyan.'

'Indeed?' he said, with a shrug of the shoulders ; 'it seems plain enough to me.'

Miss Bryne ceased her cries, and lay back sobbing piteously.

'Leave her : she will be better soon, poor thing. Now Miss Dalton, to business, please. If I go to your father's solicitors, and call upon them to act, will you endorse my orders?'

'Yes—no—yes—Mr Wynyan, what does it mean?' cried Renée wildly.

'Only that, just at this great emergency, your cousin has gone away and left everything to take its chance.'

'Gone away? My cousin Brant gone away !'

'You do not understand?' cried Wynyan.

'No, I do not understand,' she cried ; 'my head is in a whirl. Brant was here only a short time back. He came here by accident.'

'By accident!' said Wynyan with a scornful laugh.

'Yes, by accident,' said Renée indignantly; 'he met Miss Endoza, and went to see her down to her carriage.'

'Yes,' said Wynyan gravely. 'You see now.'

'Ah!' cried Renée wildly, as a light flashed in upon her darkened mind.

'Yes,' said Wynyan, and his manner changed now. There was a mocking triumph in his tones, as he looked at Renée fixedly. 'I might ask you how you could have been so blind, Miss Dalton, but I was equally in the dark. Am I not to be pitied? Your cousin saw Miss Endoza down to her carriage. It is plain enough now; he has eloped with—*my betrothed!*'

'Renée! my child, my child!' sobbed Miss Bryne wildly; and after darting an indignant, reproachful glance at Wynyan, Renée turned to sink upon her knees beside her aunt.

Wynyan stood for a few moments looking down at her, as she raised the sobbing woman's head to her breast, and then he spoke in a quiet, grave way.

'Miss Dalton, I am going straight to your solicitors, to ask them to act. If in the course of a few hours you consider that I, your father's old servant, have done wrong, you can counter-order all that I have said.'

He waited for her to speak, but she did not even turn her head, and the next minute he was on his way to Great George Street, where he bade Hamber act as if he were master in the place, and then hurried off to the solicitors, with whom he was closeted for a full hour before he made his way home.

MAN-OF-WAR PETS.

A HAPPY ship is nearly always an efficient one. Owing to the close proximity of officers and men, cheerful and willing service is much more necessary afloat than in any disciplined body of men on shore. Right hearty good-will, fore and aft, is the secret of contentment; and when the men are certain that every privilege which does not interfere with duty is allowed them, they will strain every nerve to do their work smartly and well.

No privilege is more appreciated than being allowed to keep pets on board. During four years' absence from home in Australian waters, and among the cannibal and semi-civilised islands of the South Pacific, many weary hours were whiled away by the numerous pets we had at various times on board. The first was a goat which was bought in Sydney by the captain, and presented to the lower deck. There are few better pets for a ship than a well-conducted goat. She soon gets passionately fond of her quarters, and will eat anything from a banana to a marlinespike. This goat became a sadly debauched character. She acquired in a few days such a taste for tobacco, that she would refuse the most enticing delicacy in the way of green stuff for the noxious weed, and indeed she was never happy without a quid in her jaw. But this was not her worst bad habit. No one on board knew the grog bugle better than she, and punctually she was standing beside the tub at one bell in the afternoon watch, when two glasses of water and one of rum per man are served out to the different messes. There is naturally always a glass or two left when all are served. This was poured into a can, the grog tub turned upside down, the liquor poured into the shallow bottom; then Nanny drank her tot like a man. It was too absurd to watch her conduct after this. She would skylark with any one, charge up and down the deck, butt anybody who came in her way, and, in fact, play the 'giddy goat' all round for half an hour or so; then, like other depraved human beings, she would coil herself up in a corner and sleep off the effects of her indulgences. There was also a little pig on board once in the islands. He was only a temporary acquaintance, and he was ultimately designed to be served hot with apple-sauce and vegetables. He used to chase Nanny round the ship as hard as they could go. The midshipmen soon improved the show by making jumps in the gangways with sponges, rammers, and broom handles; and many a half-hour in dreary tropical climates was spent by all hands watching the sport, and cheering the pair over the hurdles with 'Yoicks,' 'Tally-ho,' and 'Over.' Working-parties used to take Nanny ashore to give her a 'fly round' on the grass. She would never go far away from them, and was always ready for the boat to return to the ship. Sometimes one man would hold her while the others climbed into the cutter, pretending to leave her behind on shore. She would struggle and whine to the best of her abilities; and when loosed, would gallop to the shore as quick as her legs could carry her, and jump into the boat with much delight.

She got into a somewhat delicate state of health, and we gave her to a man living on Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour, where the ship was in dock. Two years after, we returned to dock, and found Nanny tethered on the hillside. She had forgotten none of her particular friends, but came up at once to be petted, and whined and tugged at her chain as hard as she could to get to her old ship again. Nanny's place was taken by a more fashionable animal—an angola. She has never become anything like so popular, though she is a much more properly conducted animal. She cares little for tobacco, and is a rigid teetotaler. Sad to relate, she is now very ill indeed, and likely to die. She was addicted to eating brass, rags, and rope ends, instead of wholesome 'baccy' and rum, and the liver of even a teetotal goat cannot successfully tackle sail-makers' yarn with needles attached. I am afraid we shall soon have a funeral at sea.

In annexing twenty-one islands in the Solomon group, we arrived one forenoon at a steep little hill in the ocean, densely wooded right down to the beach. The captain landed in his galley with a number of officers, to hoist the English flag and read the declaration of protectorate. He was as usual accompanied by the cutter, carrying the guard of honour of armed blue-jackets and marines, and the carpenter's crew to erect a flag-staff, and to cut down a new pole for the next island. No armed and naked cannibals came to meet us, as at the other places, and the interesting ceremony was performed in the presence of an opossum, who was perched, blinking in the sun, in the fork of a mangrove tree. A lieutenant and half-a-dozen sailors went in chase, and without much difficulty captured the quaint little animal. He was brought on board in a basket; but immediately after his arrival he gave signs of trouble. The padre let him out of his basket on the quarter-deck, and before you could say 'Knife,' he was up in the main-topgallant-rigging with half-a-dozen young topmen in his wake. After much cunning chase, he was captured and placed in a cage. Very soon he became tame, and gave much amusement by his smartness on the tight-rope. But opossums never do well at sea, and this one, with many others which we tried at different times, died in a few months.

The next pet was a kangaroo. He was presented by a lady in Hobart to one of our lieutenants. He never became quite at home on board, and in a few months took a passage overboard, when nobody was looking, through a gun port, and was seen and heard of no more. He was addicted to keeping late and irregular hours. He would hide himself away and sleep all day, and then wake up and become aggressively active at about 11 P.M., when everybody had turned in. Kangaroos are extensively hunted in the country parts of Australia, and give excellent sport. Our friend did so to the sentry and quartermaster of the watch at night. He had a particular fancy for the navigating officer's cabin, which is on the upper deck. For various reasons the owner of the cabin did not appreciate this flattering preference, and left strict orders with the men on night duty in the neighbourhood not to allow his highness to disturb him in his rest. The kangaroo used to 'lay off' very quietly behind the bits at the other end of the quarter-deck, and wait his opportunity. When he thought he had a good chance, he would make a rush, and in nine cases out of ten he succeeded in breaking through his enemies' lines and reaching his favourite corner; only, however, to be at once captured and ignominiously evicted. His hop, hop, hop on deck was curious to watch, but the sound of it overhead at night was ridiculously irritating; and no one mourned very much when he took his voluntary departure.

We had also a dear little flying fox. This bird or beast bears somewhat the same resemblance to a fox that a bat does to a mouse—except for size. This pet rarely came aft, and was usually to be seen in the men's messes, hanging on to an overhead rope or rafter. He was a silent friend, but still most popular. His time was chiefly occupied in discussing, in the most ridiculously serious manner, half a banana or a small fid of soft bread. He was very quiet and cautious in his habits, but at last he fell a victim to the dangers of a sea-faring life. He dropped into the soup copper in the galley, and was scalded to death before he could be got out.

But the dearest pets of the whole commission were two cassowaries which were bought at New Guinea for a few sticks of trade tobacco by Lord K., a midshipman, and Mr I., the clerk. They were quite young and small when they joined the ship, but they very soon became accustomed to their surroundings. They grew rapidly, and it was the regular routine after church on Sunday to have up a pair of scales from the 'sick bay,' and weigh them, to find out how much they had gained during the week. The male bird used to gain about two ounces and the female about one and a half ounces per week. Their house was a large wooden box with bars in front, and it was located under a gun platform in that part of the upper deck where the officers smoke. During all smoking hours the cassowaries expected to be allowed out, and to have delicacies in the way of fruit brought up for them. If they were not liberated, they would set up such a continuous and angry piping as to show they considered themselves very badly used indeed. Then they would lie down on their sides in the sun to be stroked and petted. When they were inclined for exercise, they would watch some one walking up and down the quarter-deck, wait till he had a good start, and then run after him so quickly as to be close under his heels at the forward end; then wait and race him back again. Alas! a sad fate awaited them. We were in dock at Auckland, New Zealand, and the birds had to be landed. A comfortable house was made for them by the midshipmen under a pile of shoring timbers, when one night a baulk tumbled down (Oh, sorry log!) and killed the male bird. The female at once began to pine away and to refuse her food, and in a few days she died, universally lamented by all on board. She was buried by the midshipmen beside her mate, with all due honours. This ceremony took place during school hours, but the chaplain and naval instructor could not find it in his heart to administer any serious rebuke when he found the young gentlemen standing mournfully around the grave, whistling, with evident emotion, the 'Dead March in Saul.'

A quartermaster had a gray parrot for a long time. He was a prime favourite, and had learned to say 'Let us pray.' This he said one Sunday during church, just at the wrong time, and upset the gravity of both parson and people. He was a standing guest in the ward-room when ladies came off to tea, and never failed to be well conducted and amusing. He also came to a sad and violent end. He flew outside the ship one day at sea to exercise his wings, and soon got into a flock of sea-gulls. They resented his intrusion, and speedily pecked him to death in sight of us all, who were unable to render him any assistance.

We have of course got a pretty cat and also a bow-wow. The cat is a great friend with all hands; but the dog, perhaps wisely, refuses the advances of all except the captain, who is her master, and has so far weathered the many dangers of the commission. There are other pets of which I could tell, only time fails me. At this moment, as we are homeward bound, special privilege has been granted to the men to bring home birds, &c.; and there are quite a score on the lower deck, living the happy life which all animals enjoy on board a well-conducted ship. No doubt some of them will succumb to the colder climate of the English coast, but I hope a number will be seen accompanying their owners to the homes of Merry England.

SOME NATIONAL AIRS AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS.

RICHARD WAGNER has somewhere said that the first eight bars of 'Rule Britannia' contain the whole character of the English people. And if this be true of our famous national song, a similar remark might with equal truth be applied to many airs of the Continent which at different times have summed up the hopes and aspirations of a whole people. Many of these, gathering around them in process of time a wealth of associations, have become part and parcel of the national life to a greater extent than in our own country. More especially has this been the case in France, whose ancient Government is said to have been absolute monarchy tempered with songs. Many of these gained a fame out of all proportion to their intrinsic merits, as a result of some historical association. Thus the simple ditty 'Vive Henri Quatre,' with its three verses, came to be of Royalist importance after its introduction into Collé's play, *La Partie de Chasse de Henri IV.*, in the year 1766. During the Revolution it formed one of the many prohibited songs, but took a fresh lease of life at the restoration of the Bourbons, and was performed amidst great enthusiasm at the opera in the presence of the Emperor Alexander and the king of Prussia on the evening of their arrival with the allied armies at Paris.

Another well-known air, that of 'Partant pour la Syrie,' dates from the year 1809, shortly before the battle of Wagram. The words are attributed to a poet—Count de Laborde by name—and the story has it that one evening Queen Hortense showed him a picture of a knight clad in armour, cutting an inscription on the shore with the point of his sword, and at the request of the company the poet illustrated this on the spot by a little romance. Subsequently, Queen Hortense set the verses to music, and 'Partant pour la Syrie' became the national air of the Second Empire during the reign of her son.

Of wider interest is the famous air 'Malbrook s'en va-t-en Guerre,' never more familiar in England than since the publication of *Trilby*. There is hardly a fact about it that has not been made the subject of dispute. Chateaubriand, hearing the tune sung by Arabs in Palestine, went so far as to suggest that it had been carried there by the Crusaders, either in the time of Godfrey de Bouillon or in that of Louis IX. and Joinville. It was sung by Marie Antoinette, and was used as a lullaby for the infant Dauphin in 1781. The most probable account of its origin is that it was composed in the bivouac of Marshal de Villars at Quesnoy, three miles from the field of battle, on the night after Malplaquet. The soldier who composed it was probably acquainted with the lament on the death of the Duke of Guise published in the middle of the sixteenth century. However this may have been, the air became wonderfully popular throughout France, and was introduced by Beaumarchais into his play, *Le Mariage de Figaro.* It figures as the symbol of the French army in Beethoven's *Battle Symphony.* Bourrienne tells us in his memoirs that Napoleon was wont to whistle this air when about to join the army, and that his valet always knew when he heard him that a campaign was imminent.

The tune was adapted to the words of 'For he's a jolly good fellow,' and a story is told of Janiewicz the Polish violinist, when in London in the closing year of the last century. One day he lost himself, and could not remember the name of the street in which he lived, but calling a coach, he hummed the tune of 'Malbrook' to the coachman, who, recognising it, drove him to Marlborough Street, the required place! The story is doubtless the product of a lively imagination, for cabby, though perhaps familiar with the convivial strains, would hardly have associated them with the name of Marlborough.

With regard to the majority of famous French songs, it may be truly said that they were the outcome of civil dissensions and party conflicts, and therefore hardly 'national' in the best sense, though some of them attained a wide celebrity. Such were the songs inspired by the Great Revolution and its outcomes, whether on the Royalist or opposite side. The touching air, for instance, 'O Richard, O mon Roi,' from Grétry's opera of *Richard Cœur de Lion*, became one of the most celebrated of Royalist songs, and was played at the historic banquet at Versailles in October 1789. During the first Republic this play was prohibited, but was restored to the stage by the first Napoleon. In contrast to this song we have the 'Ça Ira,' probably first heard when the Parisians marched to Versailles, the words being suggested to a street singer by General Lafayette. The words recall Benjamin Franklin's favourite saying at each step of the American insurrection. The tune is said to have been the production of a certain Bécour, a side-drum player at the opera, and, as a contre-danse, was very popular under the title of *Carillon National.* The 'Carmagnole,' associated with so many sinister memories, was originally a popular dance-tune of Provence, or, according to Grétry, a sailor song often heard in Marseilles. Another once popular song was Joseph Chénier's 'Chant du Départ,' composed for the concert celebrating the fourth anniversary of the fall of the Bastille. This is said to be the only patriotic song written during the Reign of Terror; the music is by Méhul. After much controversy, experts seem inclined to accept the tradition that Rouget de Lisle actually composed at Strasburg and in one night both words and music of the famous hymn known as 'The Marseillaise.' In dealing with airs of historical interest, one must perforce omit many of the most beautiful songs of every nation breathing of country sights and sounds, the fond vows of lovers, the peaceful joys of home—such, for instance, as the Volkslieder of Germany.

Of the martial songs more particularly connected with the various periods of storm and stress in Germany, one of the most celebrated is that of the Rhine, composed by Becker, and answered by Alfred de Musset in other well-known verses. The 'Wacht am Rhein' by Max Schneckenburger was composed about the same period as the Rhine song, but attained its widest popularity during the war of 1870. Unlike Becker's song, it cannot boast of having been set to music by seventy composers. The patriotic song of 'Deutschland, Deutschland uber alles,' was the work of the popular writer, poet, philologist, and historian, August Hoffmann, who was born at Fallersleben in the year 1798. For a time we find him acting as librarian, and later as professor, at the university of Breslau; but the liberal tendency of some of his writings caused him in 1838 to be deprived of his professorial chair. For many years he was librarian to the Duke of Ratibor, and died in this sheltered post in 1874. The German national anthem, 'Heil Dir im Siegerkranz,' was written originally for the birthday of Christian VII., king of Denmark, by a Holstein clergyman. The words were written to the air of 'God save the King' in 1790, and a few years later were modified for Prussian use.

The national airs of America have some curious associations. The 'Star-spangled Banner' was written by Francis Scott Key, on board the frigate *Surprise*, during the bombardment of Fort M'Henry by the British in 1814. Key, the story goes, had gone to release a captive friend, but was not permitted to return to Baltimore. He witnessed the engagement all night, and at dawn, when he saw that the star-spangled banner was still floating from the ramparts, wrote the verses, which, on his return to Baltimore, he had printed, with the direction that they should be sung to the tune of 'Anacreon in Heaven.' This song had been many years previously adopted by the Society of Amateur Musicians, called the Anacreontic, which held its merry meetings at the 'Crown and Anchor' tavern in the Strand. A certain president of the society—Ralph Tomlinson by name—wrote the words of this somewhat bacchanalian song, while John Stafford Smith set them to music. The strains of 'The Star-spangled Banner' are supposed to have been first heard in a tavern near the Holiday Street Theatre, Baltimore. Like so many more songs, it arose in stirring times, and from a somewhat obscure origin ultimately developed into one of the most popular of American national songs.

'Yankee Doodle' is probably a tune of English origin not older than the middle of the last century. The earliest mention of it is said to be contained in the Boston *Journal of the Times* for the month of September 1768. It informs us that 'the (British) fleet was brought to anchor near Castle William that night . . . those passing in boats observed great rejoicings, and that the Yankee Doodle song was the capital piece in the band of music.' The original name of the song is 'The Yankee's return from the Camp.' In the middle of the last century, General Amherst had under his command an army of regular and provincial troops. Among the former was a Dr Shuckburgh, to whom the air is traditionally ascribed, though it is probable enough that the words only are to be attributed to him. The colonial contingent seems to have presented a rather sorry appearance with its ill-fitting and incomplete uniforms, and, like our own militia in the last century, formed a continual butt for the humour of the regular troops. Thus Dr Shuckburgh was but falling in with the prevailing vein of pleasantry when he recommended the tune to the colonial officers 'as one of the most celebrated airs of martial musick.' Thus, once again, a song that may almost be called the American national anthem owes its origin, not to any lofty conception of national destiny, but to the efforts of a worthy doctor to enliven the tedium of routine in a provincial camp. Of the other popular song, 'Hail Columbia,' little of interest can be said. It was written in the closing years of the last century by Judge Joseph Hopkinson, and was adapted to the music of the 'President's March.' The words had been written for the actor Fox, and are said to have been first sung by him in a Philadelphian theatre in 1798, from which time the song began to rise in popular favour.

One of the most beautiful of national anthems is that of Austria, entitled 'Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser.' It is said that Haydn, during his visits to this country, had often envied the English 'God save the King;' and the outcome of his desire to provide the Austrian people with an expression of fidelity to the throne in the days of the French revolutionary war was the celebrated hymn, for which Haschka—a somewhat minor poet—wrote the words. To Von Zedlitz, a better-known writer, we probably owe the words as now sung. On the Emperor's birthday, February 12, 1797, the air was sung simultaneously at the National Theatre in Vienna and all the principal theatres in the provinces. Haydn is said to have regarded this anthem—often used in England as a hymn tune—as his favourite work, and towards the close of his life, to have often consoled himself by playing it with great expression.

Not much remains to be said concerning other national anthems of Europe, which are mostly of comparatively modern origin. Thus 'La Brabançonne' dates from the Revolution of 1830, when Belgium became an independent country, both the words and the music being composed during the struggle. The author of the words—Jenneval, a well-known actor on the Brussels stage—was killed in one of the actions near Antwerp. The Russian national anthem was composed three years after 'the Brabançonne' by Alexis Lwoff, who, besides being a violinist and musician of note at the head of the imperial orchestra in St Petersburg, held the honorary rank of general and adjutant to the Emperor Nicholas. The air met with an enthusiastic reception in Russia, the Czar on its appearance giving orders for its performance at concerts and theatres. Gounod has written a fantasia on this air, and it is also a leading theme in Rubinstein's *La Russie*.

AUSTRALIAN BRUMBIE HORSES.

THE Brumbie Horse of Australia, though not a distinct equine variety, possesses attributes and qualities peculiar to itself, and, like the wild cattle and wild buffaloes of Australia, is the descendant of runaways of imported stock. At no distant period of Australian pastoral history the Brumbie was as great a scourge to the western pastoralist as the rabbit has since become; but a scourge, fortunately, that could be dealt with more easily, and by perseverance abolished. The stature and breeding of Brumbies varies in accordance with the circumstances of origin in different localities. In some places, magnificent horses, showing great quality, have accumulated in very large numbers. As the result of well-bred, and, in some cases, imported sires having been lost, strange to say, the inbreeding did not apparently affect the good quality. In other places the veriest weeds swarm over the country; and yet these same creatures, rubbishy in stature and appearance, will, both in their wild state and when broken, accomplish feats of endurance almost incredible.

I at one time possessed a mean-looking, ill-shaped mare of true Brumbie breeding. One of her feats was to carry me—in all, fourteen and a half stones—over bush roads, a distance of eighty-five measured miles on a summer day of thirteen hours, with only an hour's midday rest. In their wild state, Brumbies will, when, in dry times water 'gives out,' travel immense distances to the next water; and even in good seasons, when twelve or more miles from the water they will travel that distance daily to and fro to drink.

In Brumbie country, the passing traveller must needs tend his horses closely; for the young Brumbie stallions, constantly driven from their haunts by the older sires, wander in search of companions, and show marvellous intelligence and tact in taking these, when found, into seclusion. It is at all times a difficult matter to recover stray stock from the Brumbie mobs. The term 'with the Brumbies' is a common one throughout bush Australia to signify hopelessly lost.

Portions of western New South Wales and southern Queensland were some years ago almost devastated by Brumbies; and all sorts of devices were resorted to by squatters to rid themselves of the pests. Many sheep-owners fenced in their water-holes with barbed wire in such a way that nothing larger than a sheep could enter to drink. In this manner tens of thousands of horses perished. Other holders destroyed immense numbers by means of strong trap-yards built in scrubs, having, near the yard, long wings or guide fences strongly made of timber, and extended outwards by means of calico strips from tree to tree, like a wire fence, for ten or more miles beyond. Except in close quarters, wild horses will not approach the fluttering strips of calico. The trap and wings being ready, a number of horsemen started the mobs in such a way as to meet the wings, along which they galloped into the yards. Once entrapped, the horses were shot; but, it being laborious to clear the yard of the dead animals, an easier and less expensive plan was resorted to.

A crush—that is, long lines of parallel fences just wide enough for one horse to pass at a time—was erected; they were driven into this long lane, at the end of which stood an expert, armed with a keen knife. As each animal passed, its jugular vein was severed, and the bleeding creature tore madly away into its native scrub, only to stagger and die from loss of blood, within half a mile of the trap. This device, though barbarous, did away with the difficulty of removing carcasses, and became the universal method of destruction.

In this work of destruction animals showing extra quality were occasionally reserved for use; but in order to enable the horsemen to drive them away, it was necessary to stop their galloping, and this was done very simply. A packing-needle and strong twine were run through the point of each ear; the twines being left in, these were then tied under the horse's chin, bending the ears down on the cheeks. Tied in this way, a horse will not gallop, and may be turned and driven quietly.

Of late years, however, the extension of railways, the utilisation of waste lands, and constant destruction, have so thinned the Brumbie haunts, that they have ceased to affect the pastures; though they are troublesome in the other ways referred to. In many cases ineffectual attempts are made to yard the mobs, and when this has been tried once or twice, it is astonishing how cunning they become. Even when by good riding a number of horsemen have brought a Brumbie mob into close quarters, it not infrequently happens that old stallions turn and charge open mouthed at the horsemen, and thus invariably break away; in which case the mob will follow in spite of all efforts made to stop them. Sometimes the riders succeed in shooting the old stallions; but even then a panic and stampede of the mad creatures follows, and they are lost. Often when old wild horses find themselves imprisoned, they charge the fences and destroy themselves.

For a time I was associated with a man named Mooney, who made his livelihood shooting Brumbies for their hides and hair in a locality within reach of a railway. Mooney used to ride a steady old mare—if one with a young foal, all the better. He would follow the Brumbies' track until the grass indicated close approach to the mobs; then he dismounted and removed his saddle. Driving the old mare in front of him, he would creep forward. He was alert to sight the mob without giving alarm, and when he did sight it upon the plain or patch of scrub, he took care to approach on the leeward side. He would creep on, well hidden behind his mare, until the wary lookout of the wild mob gave alarm; then he would hobble his mare, and sneak away into the grass, fifty yards or more. Meantime the mob would run together, and with erect crests gaze on the dull-looking stranger.

A wild, inspiring thing it is to see a startled Brumbie mob. The old stallion, hero of a hundred battles, trots around them, while they stand like statues, with ears pricked forward, and gaze. Then the old General comes forward slowly, a picture of equine beauty and grace of movement, treading as if the very ground sprung beneath his feet. Cautiously an old mare will follow the sire, and the mob will follow her, though snorting and wary, as if waiting a signal to turn and be off. On they come, until the old fellow is satisfied the new-comer is peaceful, and then he whinnies; Mooney's mare answers, and he trots up boldly. Mooney lies low in the grass the while, gripping his Winchester, alert and on the lookout for the old sire's favourite, always an old mare. There she is! the black with the yearling foal. Note how her mane and tail touch the ground, note how solicitous the old fellow is about her, and how she answers his whinnies. This is Mooney's mark, and he fires. The old favourite staggers, shot through the shoulders. Then succeeds a momentary panic, and they are off like the wind; but only for a few yards. The sire has discovered his favourite is missing, and he dashes across the lead. They stop; wild whinnying follows. He gallops back to his poor old mate; her yearling follows. They stand by her in her agony; shot perhaps in some by no means vital part. The mob returns, whinnying and stupid, running this way and that. The Winchester is going all the time. Other mares fall, then colts and fillies drop dead, only the first old mare being wounded. One by one they die, until at last the old sire is alone among his dead and dying followers. The keen-eyed destroyer sights along the shining barrel again, and the grand old fellow drops, shot through the heart.

Mooney rising now finishes the old mare, and the revolting carnage is over. This man had a lot of assistants. Once the shooting was over, his work was done. Making a fire, he would pile on armfuls of green bushes, causing great columns of white smoke to shoot upward into the clear air: this was the signal to his followers, on watch at his camp. They came, guided by the smoke, to skin the carcasses. Mooney was one of the best marksmen I have known, if not the very best.

THE METAL PLATINUM.

The curious and useful metal Platinum was probably known to the natives of South America many centuries ago. Travellers and workers in metals report that at the end of the seventeenth century it was already generally spoken of as *platina*, which in Spanish means 'little silver,' pure silver being called *plata*. It was meant by this that platinum was a less valuable metal than silver; it was not so white, did not take so fine a polish, could not be worked so easily, and it was also far less abundant.

In the year 1736, a Spaniard, named Antonio d'Ulloa, a great traveller, mathematician, and meteorologist, who had a special gift for observation, found this metal in the gold-bearing sands and gravels of South America, and drew the attention of scientific men to it in 1748. But, previous to this, Charles Wood, an English chemist, who was assay-master in Jamaica, had seen the metal about the year 1741, or perhaps rather earlier, and gave specimens of it to Dr Brownrigg, who showed it to the members of the Royal Society in London, during a meeting held in 1750. By this time Wood had published a paper on it in the forty-fourth volume of the *Philosophical Transactions* for the years 1749-50. This was the first truly scientific account of the new metal in question, and it establishes once again the priority of English chemists in metallurgical discovery.

Since those days it has been examined by scores of chemists and metallurgists, and has become one of the most important of metals, its price being frequently higher than that of gold itself. Its peculiar properties have made it most useful in the construction of scientific instruments, and apparatus employed in certain branches of industrial art and manufacture; of late years it has even been used in notable quantities in photography.

When sulphuric acid, or oil of vitriol, is manufactured by the usual process, it is not at first obtained as strong as the trade requires it; it has to be heated to drive off the superfluous water that it contains. This was formerly done, and is still done in many works, by heating the acid in large glass vessels, which are very apt to break if a current of air play upon them, or by the bumping of the acid when it happens to boil, thus causing serious loss, besides severe accidents to the workmen. This is avoided by using vessels of platinum for the concentration of the acid, and these vessels, or retorts, as they are called, would be used everywhere were it not for the enormous cost—over £1000 is not an extraordinary price for one—and when platinum is dearer than gold, the latter metal is occasionally used in its place.

Little platinum crucibles and dishes are in daily use in the chemical laboratory, and it would be difficult to do without them. No ordinary heat will melt them, and acids, except aqua-regia, do not attack them. They are, nevertheless, liable to injury by certain substances, such as tin, arsenic, potash, phosphorus, and carbon, which are always avoided as much as possible when platinum utensils are employed.

Salts of platinum, especially the chloride, which is obtained by dissolving the metal in aqua-regia, are used in testing, and in photography; the metal itself is extensively used in many kinds of electrical apparatus and for the electric light, on account of the difficulty with which it melts; and these two latter uses especially, together with the employment of platinum apparatus in the manufacture of pure sulphuric acid, have of late years done much to keep up its price to a very high figure. For, strange to say, new deposits of this precious metal come to light very slowly and only at long intervals, though search for it is carried on more or less strenuously in all parts of the world.

The principal districts which afford platinum are the slopes of the Ural Mountains, where it forms an important source of revenue to the Russian Empire. It is found also in Brazil, Peru, and Antioquia. Traces of platinum have been discovered in almost all the gold-washing districts of Borneo, Africa, Australia, and America. Along the coast of the South Sea and on the western slopes of the Cordilleras of the Andes, between the second and sixth degrees of north latitude, platinum often occurs in the alluvial soils and in the adjacent rocks. The most productive washings appear to be those at Condoto in the province of Novita, also those of Santa Lucia, and other localities in the same district. In Brazil, in the provinces of Minas Geraes and Matto Grosso, grains of platinum are also met with in the alluvial sands and gravels which produce gold. Recently, minute quantities of platinum have been found in certain rocks where their presence was quite unexpected, notably in certain syenitic rocks of Hungary, and in the veins of manganese ore which occur in the weathered or decomposed syenite near Santa Rosa d'Osos, in Columbia. It is interesting to note that the writer discovered manganese in the weathered syenite rocks of Hungary, which contain a little platinum and gold.

As there are syenite rocks in Scotland, Norway, and other countries where such stone is sometimes used for paving the streets, it is possible that a discovery of platinum may, some day, be made nearer home. The precious metal has also been obtained from the valley of the river Jacky in St Domingo, and latterly we have heard of its being extracted from certain copper and nickel ores in British Columbia, and some parts of Canada. However, though perhaps more widely distributed over the surface of the globe than is generally supposed, often accompanying grains of gold, diamonds, and other precious stones in what are termed by geologists 'alluvial formations,' it does not appear to be anywhere very abundant.

From 1824 to the present time, platinum-working has been carried on amongst the Ural Mountains, and considerable quantities are annually produced there. The grains are found in alluvial deposits along with grains of several other metals (iridium, osmium, palladium, gold, and silver), and they have also been discovered in the greenstone rock and serpentine of that district. The process by which the crude platinum grains are purified is long and expensive, so much so, that most of the 'platinum ore,' as it is termed, which is received at St Petersburg from the Urals, is exported in its crude state to other European cities.

Pure platinum has a white colour approaching to that of silver: it is remarkable by its great weight, being heavier than any other metal, gold itself not excepted. It is no less remarkable for its infusibility; it does not fuse in any of our ordinary furnaces which soon melt copper, iron, or gold. But at a white heat it can be welded and fashioned into various shapes. In the new electric furnace, and by means of the oxyhydrogen blowpipe, it can, however, be melted, and even volatilised. It is exceedingly malleable, and can be beaten out into thin plates, and drawn into wires which are only $\frac{1}{2000}$th of an inch in diameter; wires even ten times thinner than this can be made by a special process. Air and moisture have no effect upon platinum, even when it is heated to a very high temperature; and it will not dissolve in acids, with the exception of aqua-regia, which is a mixture of hydrochloric and nitric acid.

All these extraordinary properties are quite sufficient to account for the great value of platinum in the industrial arts; and should it ever be discovered in much larger quantities than has hitherto been the case, its high price would still be kept up on account of the numerous circumstances in which it would be demanded. At the present time the demand is restricted simply by the exceedingly high price of the metal. When all the surface gold—that is, the loose nuggets and grains found in alluvial soil and streams—is exhausted in any country, the metal is sought for in the rock, and quartz reefs are attacked by powerful machinery and stamps. The same will some day occur for platinum; in fact, we may say it has already begun. Hitherto, the rocks in which it has been found are syenite, serpentine, and greenstone. Probably it will, sooner or later, be found in others. The hope of making some such discovery lends additional interest to explorations in Central Africa, Australia, and other little known districts of the globe.

TO A STREET SYCAMORE.

HERE in the narrow street you stand,
Built round about on every hand;
Only your topmost boughs can spy
The blue waves breaking on the land.

Yet all the changes of the year
Above you in the skies appear—
The daily marvel of the dawn,
Storm-cloud and star-light shining clear.

Yours are the sunset and the dew,
And many a wandering wind that blew
By wood and mountain over-sea,
Whispers his secrets sweet to you.

To you with each returning Spring
The crows their clumsy courtship bring,
And the blithe starlings come and go
Among your boughs on restless wing.

In the gray, narrow street you bear
Glad Summer's banner, green and fair;
The music of the woods and hills
Dreams all about you down the air.

And you, green hermit of the street,
Make all our daily duty sweet,
Preaching Life's beauty and her joy
To us who sit about your feet.

D. J. R.

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ARTELS: CO-OPERATION IN RUSSIA.

By Edith Sellers.

Whenever a Russian has anything to do, no matter what it may be, he straightway organises an artel; for work alone he cannot, and will not. There are artels of every possible kind: harvesters, shepherds, masons, carpenters, porters, navvies, dockers, all have their own artels; and so have railway officials, bankers' clerks, nay, even beggars, thieves, and probably, though the fact is not recorded, murderers and highwaymen. If a bridge is to be built, or a marsh drained, the first thing done is always to form an artel; and the same process must be gone through before a picnic can be given, or a public dinner. Some artels are permanent, others are temporary; some have hundreds of names on their rolls, while others have perhaps half a dozen. In one form or another they are to be met with at every turn: Russia, in fact, without its artels would not be Russia.

An artel is an association of persons who agree to throw in their lot together, and stand by each other for better for worse. If the artel is 'productive,' the members work together, and divide equally what money they earn; if it is 'consumptive,' they share equally the expense incurred. The most marked characteristic of these associations is the perfect equality which prevails among their members. No matter what may be a man's personal gifts or deficiencies, from the moment he enters an artel, he is simply on a par with his comrades. He must bear the same burdens as they do; and he receives the same rewards. In his turn he will be the artelman, or chief of his artel; in his turn, too, he will be its hewer of wood and drawer of water. As the former, he will be neither richer nor poorer than as the latter; for the only emolument attached to the office of artelman is shoe-money—that is, a small sum granted as a compensation for the shoes worn out while tramping about transacting official business.

Artels are one of the most ancient institutions in Europe. As early as the tenth century they were in existence among the hunters and fishermen in the Dnieper region; and they seem to have been organised on much the same lines then as they are now. A number of men would join together, choose a chief, and agree to hunt or fish under his direction. They regarded their booty as common property, and divided it equally at the end of each expedition. A modern productive artel is arranged on the same principle. In a village, the peasants who have not enough land of their own to keep them employed, form themselves into an artel (sometimes into two or three) and elect one of their number to be artelman. This artelman, who is their representative, director, and manager, must try to find out where there is work to be done, and arrange for them to do it, on the best terms he can. He allots to each member the work he has to do, and sees that he does it. He provides the whole company with food and lodging so long as the job lasts; and then, after defraying all expenses, divides among them equally what remains of their joint earnings. The authority of an artelman is unlimited; whoever disobeys his orders must leave the artel. As his tenure of office, however, is short, and depends on the votes of the members, there is little chance of his abusing his power.

One of these unions often undertakes to do all the harvesting or haymaking on a large estate. In that case the owner has nothing whatever to do with the work from the time the members of the artel take possession of his fields, until the crop is safely housed. They collectively are responsible for its being properly handled and stored by the appointed time; and they must make good any damage it suffers through carelessness or lack of punctuality on their part. Thus their interests are all bound together, a fact that leads to their keeping a sharp watch on each other, and showing scant toleration for loafing and all other reprehensible practices. Sometimes an artel agrees to do all the work on the farm for a year, or even a series of years. Under this arrangement the men generally receive one-half of the produce of the land for their labour. Many of the mines, especially in the Ural district, are worked entirely on the artel system; and the clearing and draining of the great marshes are managed in the same way. Several important industrial undertakings, too, are carried on by artels; and a few years ago a number of workmen volunteered to form one to work the great gun factory at Tula for the Government. Needless to say their offer was declined.

Oddly enough, many of the dockers' artels consist entirely of women—of the Amazon type, of course. They manage their affairs in an eminently business-like fashion, loading and unloading ships most expeditiously. The tobacco-growers' artels, too, are formed chiefly of girls and women, who do all the work on a plantation in return for half the produce, and sometimes lodging, fuel, and lights. In the ferrymen's artels, all the members act as artelmen in regular rotation, without any form of election; and in those of the fishermen, the boats and tackle are counted as members, and receive—or rather their owners receive in their stead—a share of the joint earnings of the crew.

The most important of the artels are those called the Artels of the Bourse, owing to their headquarters in St Petersburg and Moscow being near the Bourse. These are in reality powerful labour unions, organised on communist principles. No one is admitted into one of these artels unless he is known to be honest, sober, and industrious, and is able to pay an entrance-fee of at least one thousand roubles. There are some three hundred of them, and they are divided into two classes—labourers' artels and clerks'. The former are under contract with the railway and shipping authorities to load, unload, collect, or deliver all goods sent by rail or water to or from St Petersburg and Moscow. They are bound under a heavy penalty to keep the railways supplied with as many porters, guards, and other officials as they require. If any accident occurs through the fault of any one of their members, they must pay for all the damage done; and if anything is stolen while under their care, they must replace it. The clerks' artels are organised in the same way as the labourers' and peasants'. They undertake to provide the leading banks and commercial establishments with cashiers, clerks, and all the officials they need. The whole artel is responsible for any loss resulting from the carelessness, stupidity, or dishonesty of any one of its members. If a cashier embezzle money, his fellow-members must repay it within a week; or, if that be impossible, work without salary until it be paid.

Artels for distribution or consumption are more numerous even than for production. People whom the merest chance throws together while working, travelling, or even loafing, form artels for supplying themselves with food, and sometimes also with lodgings, clothing, &c. They depute one of their number to cater for the whole party, and then leave the matter entirely in his hands, dividing the expense. Then there are lending artels, the members of which club their earnings together and lend them to the one of the number who stands most in need of them, or who can put them to the best use.

Of all the artels, however, the beggars' are the most interesting and—the most immoral. In no European country but Russia would such institutions meet with toleration. But there begging is a recognised profession. In many villages, as soon as the harvest is in, the whole population form themselves into a huge artel, which is split up into a number of parties. The halt, blind, maimed, &c., are divided out equally among the parties, so that each of them may have an equal claim on public sympathy. They then start off on a begging tour, in the course of which they sometimes go two or three hundred miles away from their homes. During the day they go about in different directions, no two parties being allowed to enter the same village; but at night they all meet together, and then, if all tales be true, they have 'high jinks.' They put everything they receive into a common stock; they eat the food and sell the clothes, dividing the proceeds. During a three months' expedition they often clear enough money to keep them in idleness for the six months that follow. Some of the beggars' artels are permanent institutions, the members of them doing nothing but beg from one year's end to another. They are said to have a fairly pleasant life on the whole, and to be better fed and better clothed than the majority of those who give them alms.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XXXI.—BRANT'S MAD JOYS.

THERE was a striking little scene outside the hotel at Newhaven a couple of nights later, just before the starting from the harbour of the Dieppe boat.

A couple of ordinary-looking men were down there, apparently taking a good deal of interest in the passengers already on board, and after a time, evidently with the intention of affording their bodies varied refreshment, they had made their way into the hotel coffee-room to discuss in tankards a mixture of claret and soda-water.

Here, too, they seemed to take a quiet interest in the people who were about to cross by the night packet.

'No go,' said one of them quietly.

'Well, I'm not quite sure, but I think we're right.'

'What shall you do?—go over?'

'Not if I can help it, dear boy. Rough night, and I'd rather sleep here if I can.'

Just then an official made an announcement, and the greater part of the occupants of the room moved out to the quay, the two men finishing their 'cup,' and following, ending by

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crossing the gangway and going on board the steamer, which was loudly blowing off steam.

There was the customary bustle and confusion, and the two men lit cigarettes, separated, walked round the deck, met in the saloon cabin, did not look at each other, and met again a minute or two later on deck.

'Well?'

'No: I don't know, though. Let's try.'

The speaker walked slowly aft, to where a passenger stood in a thick ulster with a carefully muffled lady companion clinging to his arm. Stopping short a couple of yards behind the two travellers, one of the men cried loudly: 'Hanged if here isn't old Brant Dalton!'

The passenger in the ulster swung round sharply with an oath, and the two men stepped up on either side.

'Thought it was you, sir,' said the chief speaker.—'No nonsense, please. You're wanted.'

A dozen pairs of eyes were turned upon them directly as they stood just beneath one of the swinging lamps, and the lady began to sob violently, as she clung to her companion, who recovered himself directly.

'Here, what is it?' he cried in a loud, hectoring voice. 'Some mistake here.'

'No mistake, Mr Dalton. Come ashore, please.'

'Not a bit of it. Who are you?'

'Police, sir. You answered to your name. The game's up.'

'Where's your warrant?' cried Brant.

'Never you mind about my warrant, sir. We want you, and you'll come ashore.'

'Here, who are you—the captain?' cried Brant, as a burly man in uniform came up.

'Yes, what is it?'

'These men are pretending to be police-officers, and are trying to get me ashore.'

'Where's your warrant?' said the captain.

'We don't want any warrant,' said the first speaker.—'Here, you bring the lady.'

'Oh, that's it, is it?' cried Brant, as the chill of horror passed off, and with it the dread that he was to be arrested in connection with the stolen plans.—'Here, captain, I claim your protection. We are saloon passengers. I'm not going to enter into explanations here, but this lady is my wife.'

'Yes, yes, yes,' came loudly from the little trembling figure muffled in wraps. 'Señor, it is my husband. You cannot take him away.'

The captain chuckled.

'Runaway match, eh?' he said.

'Well, yes,' cried Brant.—'They can't do this sort of thing.'

'No,' said the captain quietly.—'You can't come that,' he continued to the two men.—'Hadn't you better go back, sir, with them and settle matters quietly?'

'No,' cried Brant. 'You've got to protect us, and if you don't, I'll appeal to the passengers and crew. I've married the lady, and if any one dares to try and arrest me—it isn't the law.'

'Go back and wire,' said the first man to his companion. 'I'll cross and stick to him like a leech.'

The next minute the last bell rang, the hawsers were cast off, and Brant Dalton, who had been married at a registry office in Clerkenwell, assisted his trembling hysterical wife down into the cabin, a hero and heroine to the rest of the passengers till the boat began to rise and fall outside the harbour. Then the love match was forgotten in more serious thoughts, and Isabel Dalton, *née* Villar Endoza, succumbed to the general malady. At this point Brant handed her over to the stewardess, and went on deck to have a smoke, conscious directly after that some one else was smoking close at hand, the detective making himself as comfortable as he could in the process of his self-imposed task of sticking to his man like a leech.

Brant walked up and down two or three times, and then stopped in front of the detective.

'Have a cigar?' he said shortly.

'Thank ye, sir;' and the case was offered, and a cigar taken and lit.

'That was a clever dodge of yours,' said Brant at last.

'Oh, I don't know, sir. It answers sometimes when you're in doubt. Takes a party by surprise.'

'How came you to think I should go this way?'

'I didn't, sir. My instructions were to come and watch the Newhaven boats, same as others were doing with the Southampton, Dover, and Folkestone.'

'When did you see the Count last?'

'Day before yesterday, sir; but it was his friend who sent me down here.'

'What friend?'

'Perhaps I oughtn't to talk, sir, but I suppose it don't matter now, and I expect he's a friend of yours—Mr Levvinson. You know him, sir?'

'Oh yes, well,' replied Brant wonderingly.

'I've done a deal of business for him in my time, sir.'

'Watching people?'

'Yes, sir, and other work. He's a busy gentleman in his way.'

'No use to be rough with the fellow,' thought Brant: 'he could make things very uncomfortable;' so he stopped, chatting to the man for the greater part of the night, with the result that the officer informed him, just before they reached port, that he was not going to make things more unpleasant than he could help, for the lady's sake, but that he must keep an eye on him till he got his instructions.

'Going on to Paris, I suppose?'

'Of course,' said Brant. 'To the "Continental." I shan't try to run away.'

Brant saw no more of the man till they reached the hotel, where a message was sent to his room that the officer wanted to see him, just as he was trying to comfort Isabel, who was certain that the Count was on his way to come and kill them both.

She gave a faint cry when the man appeared with a smiling countenance.

'It's all right, sir. My mate wires me that he has seen Count Endoza and Mr Levvinson, and that I am to go back directly.'

'But about us?'

'Oh, you're all right, sir. No instructions about you.'

'Look here,' said Brant in an undertone so that Isabel should not hear: 'what does this mean?'

'Well, sir, I should say, speaking from old experience, that the old man and his friend wanted to catch you and stop what was going on; but as soon as they heard you were married, they knew that couldn't be undone, so there you are.—Oh, thank you, sir. T'other side pay me, of course, but thank you all the same. Wish you and your good lady all happiness. Happier match for her than to have been Mrs Levvinson.'

'What!' cried Brant excitedly.

'I beg your pardon, sir. That was only how it struck me from the taking he was in. Good-day, sir. Happy to do business with you in our way again.'

The officer crumpled up the piece of paper he had received, and bowed his way out, while Isabel ran to her husband's side.

'Oh, Brant dear, don't say that you are to be dragged away from me!' she cried tearfully.

'Wasn't going to, little woman,' replied Brant, who somehow felt chilled, and as if a great deal of the romance had gone out of his evasion. 'They've given us up, and we are to go on and be as happy as we like. But I say, Bel dear, why was Levvinson along with your father?'

'Oh, the horrid man!' she cried. 'I hate him.'

'But you don't mean, dear, that he ever pretended to'——

'Oh no, dear,' cried Isabel; 'he was in real earnest. He was always sending me presents and watching for me in the Park.'

Brant said something to himself, looking furiously at his young wife, but directly after, a grim smile began to dawn upon his face as he realised what a triumph he was having over his old enemy, though some of his thoughts did not augur well for the happiness which the detective had wished.

HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE ABROAD.

Appointments in Her Majesty's Service abroad are not only very valuable but also of great importance and distinction, and the prospects of promotion are so brilliant that the situations are eagerly sought after by sons of persons in the highest social rank. The entrance examinations, however, are hard, the prescribed subjects covering a very wide range. The vacancies in all departments average about one hundred yearly, and in most cases competition is very keen.

As the work lies for the most part in tropical climates, candidates are not allowed to enter the literary examination until they have satisfactorily passed a severe medical test. In regard to service in India, candidates are examined by a Medical Board sitting at the Indian Office. Great stress is laid upon good vision and hearing, and their physical powers of endurance are tested in order that no one may be allowed to compete unless of active habits and of sound constitution. In particular, candidates for the Indian Forest Service are recommended to submit themselves to their private medical adviser with regard to weak constitution, defective vision, impaired hearing, or the existence of any congenital defect. This precaution, though urged by the Commissioners for one branch only, may profitably be taken in regard to all foreign offices. Further, it is to be understood that this private examination is merely suggested to lessen the chances of disappointment, and that it is by no means intended to take the place of, or to influence in any way, the official examination. And when we consider the inconvenience and expense of preparing for the literary tests, it will be seen that this advice is by no means to be lightly passed over.

The 'Indian Civil' is the most popular branch of the foreign service. The number of appointments is usually large, averaging 44 for the past ten years, the average number of competitors for the same period being 178. While the number of vacancies varies but little, competition has of late become less keen. In 1894, 131 candidates came forward for 61, as against 69 in 1892 for 32, and 250 in 1890 for 45 vacancies. The examinations are held annually in August, and a fee of £5 is charged. The limits of age are twenty-one and twenty-three on April 1st of the year in which the examination is held, and candidates must be natural-born subjects of Her Majesty. The scheme of the examination is very extensive, and embraces the Language, Literature and History of England, France, Germany, Ancient Greece and Rome, together with Sanskrit and Arabic, besides Pure and Applied Mathematics, Natural Science, Political Economy, Roman and English Law, and Political Science. Candidates are allowed to name any or all of the subjects mentioned in the syllabus; no subject is compulsory, but no credit is given for knowledge represented by less than one-fifth of the maximum. Beyond that standard, candidates might be marked up to the maximum if their work were of sufficient merit.

Successful competitors, before proceeding to India, are on probation for one year, and those who pass their probation at one of the colleges or universities approved by the Secretary of State for India receive an allowance of £100. During this year candidates are tested in their proficiency in riding, and are examined in Indian Penal and Criminal Law, in the principal vernacular language of the province to which they are assigned, in the History of British India, and in two of six optional subjects in Oriental Languages and Law.

The salary—and this is doubtless the most interesting part of the regulations—commences at 400 rupees per month, one year in every four is the 'holiday' allowed, and after twenty-one year's actual service, the happy Indian Civil Servant can retire on an annuity of £1000.

Less important are the India Forest and India Police Services. In the former, the limits of age are seventeen and twenty; in the latter, nineteen and twenty-one; while the examination fee for each is £4. Candidates 'must be unmarried, and if they marry before reaching India, they will forfeit their appointments.' The competitions are held simultaneously, and in the same subjects and papers. The obligatory subjects are: Mathematics, English Composition, and German, the optional embracing three languages, four sciences, and English History, from which list candidates may choose two subjects. Freehand and Geometrical Drawing may be taken up in addition.

Competitors for the Forest Service have to undergo a course of special training for about three years, for which an annual charge of about £183 is made. When they obtain the Diploma in Forestry of the Royal Indian Engineering College at Cooper's Hill, they are appointed Assistant-conservators in the Forest Service of India. The salary runs from 250 through various grades to 2000 rupees per month. The annual number of vacancies is about twelve, and for these from thirty to forty competitors come forward.

The Police Service offers this attraction over the Forest Service, that the successful candidates can proceed at once to take up a remunerative appointment in India, there being no expensive preliminary training in this country. Probationers are required to proceed to India not later than the October following the examination. A free passage is provided, and a salary of 250 rupees per month is allowed. On passing the necessary departmental examination, they are appointed Assistant-superintendents of Police, with a monthly salary of 300 rupees, increasing to 500. There are excellent prospects of promotion to the rank of District Superintendent, and there are a few superior posts with salaries ranging from 1000 to 2500 rupees per month. These appointments were thrown open to competition in 1893, and examinations may now be expected annually in the month of June. Competition is fairly keen, on an average seven candidates presenting themselves for each vacancy advertised. The leave of absence is based upon the same lines as for the Indian Civil Service, and when we consider the liberality of pay, holiday, and pension, we are apt to think that an Indian Police Superintendent should manage to live comfortably and be tolerably happy. No doubt they are so.

We come now to another interesting class of appointments—those of Student Interpreters. For such there are but four or five vacancies annually in China, Japan, and Siam, and three or four in Turkey, Persia, Morocco, and the Levant. The limits of age are eighteen and twenty-four, and the examination fee is £4. Candidates must, of course, be natural-born subjects of Her Majesty, and here it is further enacted that 'persons not actually born within the United Kingdom, or born within the United Kingdom of parents not born therein, will only be allowed to compete by special permission of the Secretary of State.'

In the examinations for Interpreters in China, &c., the most important subjects of the entrance examinations are Latin, French, German, and Mercantile and Criminal Law. A special feature of the tests set for those in Turkey, &c., is the prominence given to ancient and modern languages. Especially in Latin and French the examination is most searching.

Naturally, many candidates are not attracted to these appointments owing to the fewness of the vacancies. Still, the prospects are most enticing, and the examinations are not so hard as those for the Indian Civil Service. Successful candidates for China receive £200 a year on leaving England. Five years later they have a fixed salary of £300, and may ultimately become Vice-consuls with £600 to £750, or even Consul-general with £2000.

Successful candidates for Interpreterships in Turkey, &c., are required to spend two years at Oxford in order to study Oriental languages. During their residence there they receive a salary of £200 a year. On leaving Oxford, the students are named Assistants, and detached for service under the embassy at Constantinople, the legations at Teheran, Athens, or Morocco, or in one of Her Majesty's consulates in the East. They get £300 a year, and before receiving further promotion, require to pass an examination in the Civil, Criminal, and Commercial Law, and in the Political History of Turkey, in International Law, and in the history, language, and mode of administration of the country in which they have resided. The higher ranks in the service are Vice-consuls, with salaries ranging up to £400, and Consuls, ranging from £500 to £1600, in all cases with allowances.

To supply the Civil Service of Ceylon, Hong-kong, and the Strait Settlements, cadetships have been established. Vacancies for these, however, are very rare. Ten appointments were made in 1889 as against two in 1892. There were none in 1893 or in 1894. The limits of age are twenty-one and twenty-four, and the subjects of examination include Latin, Greek, French, German, Mathematics, History, and Law. Successful candidates are allowed, in order of merit, to choose the colony they wish to serve. Ceylon cadets get a commencing salary of 3000 rupees per annum, and a pundit allowance of 30 rupees per month for twenty-one months for the services of a teacher of the native language. On passing in Singhalese and Tamil, in Law, and in Government Accounts, they obtain 3500 rupees per year, with excellent prospects of ultimately reaching an annual income of 18,000. At present the rupee is calculated by the Ceylon Government at 1s. 10½d.

Hong-kong cadets get a salary of $1500, and on passing in Chinese and law they receive $1800, with prospects of rising to $6500. Those in the Strait Settlements may rise to a maximum of $7800 per annum, and when, as at present, the Government reckons the dollar worth 4s. for the purpose of payment in England of leave salary, and at 3s. 8d. for the payment of pension, this income is most desirable. Regulations for pensions and leave of absence are quite enough to excite the envy of any hard-worked person at home. In the case of ill-health, an officer may retire on a pension after ten years' full service; otherwise he must have attained the age of fifty-five years. For ten years' service, fifteen-sixtieths of his salary may go for a pension, and one-sixtieth may be added for each year's service beyond ten. In the

Ceylon Civil Service, a deduction of 4 per cent. is made from all salaries as a contribution to the Widows' and Orphans' Pension Fund.

A branch of the foreign service, all the more interesting because comparatively unknown at home, is the Jamaica Civil Service. Appointments in this are open to all British-born subjects over eighteen and under twenty-four years of age. The salaries rise from £80 by £5 annually to £100, thence by £10 to £200, and by further promotion to grades of £300, £400, and £500 per annum. Assistant-collectors receive £50 per annum for every horse required to be kept. Three months' leave on full-pay is granted every two years, and half-pay leave to the extent of one-sixth of their official service.

The examinations, held each year in October, are conducted by the Jamaica School Commissioners, but the answers to the papers set are sent to the English Civil Service Commissioners to be examined and reported upon. The vacancies number about twenty annually, and the examination fee amounts to 25s. The subjects prescribed are those for the Second Division in the Imperial Service, with the addition of Latin, French, and Euclid and Algebra. The marks gained are as a rule exceedingly low, the first successful candidate scoring only 51 per cent., while the twentieth had 32 per cent. When it is considered that in the competition of July 1894 for 150 clerks in the home service, the first had 80 and the last successful 67 per cent., it will be seen that, with their superior educational advantages, competitors from England would have an excellent chance of gaining appointments should they wish to migrate to Jamaica. The climate of Jamaica is excellent, the temperature averaging about 86° Fahrenheit all the year round—about the maximum in the finest British summer.

HIS HIGHNESS'S PLAYTHINGS.

CHAPTER I. (*continued*).

'THERE I am not agreeing with you then,' replied the Maharajah rudely. 'I think it same like this. Burton not be liking to have people say he kill his child through own fault, so he smash up old bolt-screw and throw him in the bush himself where he find. Then he get duplicate bolt from workshop, and put in apparatus, so people say some one tamper with signal and not his fault.'

Angus Morrison shifted uneasily in his chair. The dastardly suggestion irritated him. Colonel Sadleir said:

'I don't think that is at all likely. Though Your Highness was working the signals, they were just as much under Burton's charge as the engine itself. It was his duty to see that they were in working order before the railway was used, and the fabrication of such a story would only saddle him with a different kind of blame. I incline to the opinion that the signals were tampered with—but not by Burton.'

'Well, I not rightly see how it happen then,' responded the Maharajah sullenly, and there followed a silence which was becoming awkward, when Morrison raised himself in his seat and pointed to the sky over the city.

'The doctor was right,' he said. 'There is going to be a thunder-storm.'

The city of Jettore was built upon a flat plain, skirted upon one side by a ridge of rising ground upon which stood the residency and the bungalows of Colonel Sadleir's staff. The new palace, built during the reign of the last Maharajah, was upon the other side of the ridge, and was therefore invisible from the city, and *vice versâ,* though from the residency a clear view was obtainable of the palace on one side and the city on the other. The veranda where they were sitting was on the city side, and it was in this direction that the storm was gathering. Even as Morrison spoke the great cloud canopy that had attracted his attention was split with a streak of forked lightning, and the thunder crashed. In a minute, as happens in the East, lightning-flash and thunder-peal had become incessant, and rain fell in torrents.

For a short time they sat watching the storm, and then suddenly the young prince clutched Morrison's arm. 'See! Oh see!' he exclaimed. 'Isn't that what—you—call fun? There will be explosion! The powder-house is on fire!'

A quarter of a mile away the nearest building on the city side was the magazine and cartridge factory from which the state troops were supplied with ammunition—mostly blank, nowadays, for pageants and reviews. It consisted of a range of white *chunam* buildings, forming a square, and approached by a central archway on the side facing the residency. Immediately over that portion of the block where the powder was stored a tall flag-staff rose with the lightning-conductor attached, and it was to this that the Maharajah was excitedly pointing. The lightning was playing round the copper spike of the conductor in little tongues of flame, like fiery serpents.

Morrison shrank instinctively from the touch of the flabby fingers; but professionalism asserted itself, and he began to improve the occasion. He explained how the electric fluid was diverted and carried off by the conductor to spend itself harmlessly in the earth, and that instead of threatening an explosion, the conductor was at that moment protecting the magazine and the workmen on the premises from any such risk. 'And I do not understand what you mean, Maharajah Sahib, when you speak of an explosion which would kill or maim a score of people as fun,' he added coldly.

But his pupil was now far too deeply interested in the scientific details of controlling the electric fluid to notice his rebuke. Question and answer followed in quick succession, and by the time the Maharajah had mastered the whole subject of 'earth connections,' 'copper points,' and the other technicalities of lightning conduction the storm had spent itself.

Colonel Sadleir had long ago stolen away to go to his wife, who was nervous in thunder-storms, and the Maharajah rose to return to the palace. Morrison went with him.

'Morrison Sahib, you're a very clever scientific,' he said. 'If I knew all curious things, same like you, I should have heap of fun—every day.'

The gaunt tutor and the squat, waddling hobbledehoy had gone but a short distance along the veranda when a little face, pale with wrath, peered after them round the tatty of the room near which they had been sitting.

'You wretch!' muttered Bessie, shaking her fist at the retreating figures.

CHAPTER II.

That same night, after dinner, Colonel Sadleir took Bessie to task—rather mildly, it is true—respecting her persistent incivility towards the Maharajah.

'It is quite possible to dislike people very much without being downright rude to them,' he said, stroking his daughter's brown hair.

Bessie looked at him quizzically. 'You evidently speak from experience, father dear,' she said. 'I believe you have been trying it—on the same subject.' And then somewhat to his surprise she proceeded to agree with him quite eagerly. 'You shan't have occasion to complain again—not for a while at least,' she added. 'I mean to be extra sweet to His Highness and take an interest in all his doings. I have sent my ayah over to the palace to say that I should like a trip on the private railway to-morrow.'

This was hardly what the Colonel wanted, for doubt was thick upon him, but he said nothing—only took precautions. During the next few days Bessie had several trips on the miniature railway; she inspected the electric light installation that was being fitted in the gaudy, gimcrack-furnished palace: and she was taken to see a new elephant-house that was in course of construction. Sometimes the Maharajah was present to do the honours himself, and sometimes not; but on every occasion when she met him Bessie was exceedingly gracious, and Morrison—always at hand when the tours were personally conducted—was amused and a little puzzled by her efforts to draw the young prince out.

One day, about a week after the thunderstorm, Bessie was talking to the Maharajah's engine-driver in the residency garden. Burton was a thick-set, open-faced Yorkshireman, who had been tempted by the high pay offered him to throw up his billet on the G. I. P. R., and enter private service at the palace of Jettore. He was an especial favourite and protégé of the Political Agent's little daughter, who, coming out shortly after the fatal accident to his child, had paid many consoling visits to the sorrowing parents in their small bungalow outside the palace gates. She had been asking him if he had made any fresh discovery in the matter of the broken bolt-screw, and had received a negative reply.

'I wish you would tell me, Burton, what was your own private opinion of the accident—at first, I mean, and before you found the bolt under the prickly pear,' said Bessie.

The engine-driver glanced about him before replying, but there was no one nearer than an ancient *mahli* watering the flowers a hundred yards away.

'Well, Miss,' he said, 'I don't mind telling you, though I wouldn't mention it to another living soul. I believe His Highness wasn't exactly truthful. You see I was positive that the signal, being at safety, told me to come on round the curve. 'Tisn't as if I wasn't an experienced man; I've been driving engines and watching signals this twenty years, and never a fault before. What I thought was as he muffed it and didn't pull the lever till after I'd passed, and then, seeing what had happened, lied, so as to shift the blame. I didn't say anything, because it's our daily bread not to offend him, and whichever it was it was an accident. I am glad I didn't now, and I'm sorry I misjudged His Highness. But if I can lay my hand on the man that meddled with the bolt, it will be bad for him.'

'Don't you suspect any one?'

'No one in particular,' replied Burton. 'There's a hundred niggers about the place, each of 'em as curious as a pack of monkeys. The wisest of them would pull the inside out of a barrel-organ to see what makes the noise.'

'Yes,' said Bessie, 'it may be difficult to find out about the pulling to pieces, but how about the putting together again? That ought not to be so hard. It must have been done almost immediately after the accident, and whoever put the new bolt in must have pulled the old one out.'

Burton tried hard to read the flushed and eager young face. 'You mean His Highness, I think, Miss,' he said at length, with a shake of his head. 'That crossed my mind, too, when I found the bolt; but it wouldn't wash, so to speak. You see if it had been him he would have had to go to the workshop for the new bolt immediately, and I'm pretty certain he didn't leave the ground before we all examined the apparatus.'

'Well, but, supposing the tampering took place then and caused the accident, *some one* must have put in the new bolt between the passing of the train and the examination of the signal,' said Bessie, adding slowly: 'What if *some one*'—with emphasis—'had the new bolt ready with him, and slipped it in the moment the train had gone by.'

The engine-driver looked at her with a dawning horror which showed that he understood her drift at last. 'Good heavens! Miss, but do you know what you are charging him with?' he exclaimed hoarsely. 'To have acted like that, he must have deliberately planned the whole thing and took out the old bolt on purpose. And him so fond of my Willie, and liking to have him about! Why, it was him who used to encourage the boy to go and play there while he amused himself with the signals, and'——

'Exactly,' interrupted the girl, carried away now by the force of the conviction which had filled her ever since she had overheard the conversation—or part of it—in the veranda, 'exactly; but that all points the same way, Burton, don't you see?'

'By heavens! If I could prove it, Prince or no Prince shouldn't save him. The black heart that could plan such mischief to an innocent child'——

'Hush!' said Bessie, laying a soothing hand on his coat-sleeve. 'You cannot prove it; it is too long ago, and there is no real evidence. Let the past alone and look to the future. Watch closely, Burton, and let me know anything curious that you can't account for. I am watching, and I think father and Mr Morrison are watching too, though they don't tell me. I have an idea that there may be mischief with the dynamos; he is so keen on them just now. You see, if we can find out anything fresh, we could not only prevent it, but the exposure would go far to prove and bring punishment for that other horror. Instead of intrusting him with the State when he comes of age, the supreme government would have to shut him up as a lunatic—at least.'

So it was that another pair of eyes were set to work—the sharpest, and of just cause the most tireless, of those which at that time were focused on the palace at Jettore.

In the afternoon of the following day the Political Agent and the Maharajah's tutor were again sitting in the veranda of the residency, chatting, as men will when not sure of their ground, on every subject except the one uppermost in their minds. By a sort of tacit understanding *that* had not been again referred to, though the shadow of it lay upon them like some hideous nightmare. It was with them day and night, and the strain of it was that they were powerless to act. Public policy, the exigencies of officialism, fairness to the suspect—everything precluded action on mere surmise. Colonel Sadleir knew, and Morrison knew, that even a confidential report to Simla on such slender grounds as they could urge would go into a pigeon-hole or, more probably, the waste-basket.

Presently they were joined by Mrs Sadleir and Bessie, and shortly afterwards Doctor Snelgar looked in on his way home from a ride. The medical officer attached to the Political Agency was a garrulous, cheery little man, with an unceasing flow of gossip, and never at a loss for a topic. The last person in the world to whom the Colonel and Morrison would have confided the doubts that assailed them, he began, by some strange chance and with the airiness of evident unsuspicion, to trench upon the dangerous ground.

'Wonderful chap, the Maharajah,' said the doctor. 'You ought to be proud of him, Morrison; the way you've brought him on is a credit all round. Unlucky though, in his amusements, to other people sometimes. I hope his latest excursion into the realms of practical knowledge won't make me busy.'

'I have seen Smith, the London foreman in charge of the electric installation, and he tells me that there is no possibility of accident yet, and won't be till a current is generated. At present they are only fixing the arcs and laying the circuit wires,' remarked Colonel Sadleir.

'Ah, but I wasn't talking about electricity, Colonel,' replied Snelgar, pouncing on the chance to impart information first-hand. 'How about gunpowder as a medium for amateur experiments?' he added with an air of mystery.

'What are you driving at, doctor?' said Morrison, struggling to hide his eagerness. 'I thought I was pretty well aware of all the Maharajah's pursuits. He hasn't taken me into his confidence on any new departure in that line.'

'Not about the magazine?' returned the doctor. 'I thought you would be sure to know; but this shows that the unfortunate medico who has to be out all hours scores occasionally by picking up a bit of fresh news. I was called up at five yesterday morning to Mrs Bell, the *padré's* wife, and while dressing I saw His Highness coming out of the main gate of the magazine. It is in full view of my bungalow—just as it is from here, by the way—and I made him out quite plainly. Later on I was passing the gate, and I asked the watchman what had brought him such a distinguished visitor so early. The man said that the Maharajah wanted to take a look round while the workpeople were absent, so as to see if the place was left with a due regard to safety. "But Doctor Sahib," the watchman added, "I beseech you to keep a closed lip about this matter. The Maharajah desired secrecy, and enjoined it upon me at my peril." The rogue had evidently had a tip to close his mouth, but as I hadn't one—why, there you are.'

Bessie, who had been drinking in the doctor's words, saw a glance of consternation pass between her father and Morrison. The tutor was silent, and the Colonel only said:

'What do you imagine this outbreak of royal energy portends, Snelgar?'

The doctor laughed. 'A good rousing firework display somewhere in the palace grounds,' he replied. 'I expect His Highness was after stealing a pound or two of his own powder. Boys will be boys, you know.'

But Morrison shook his head. 'It could hardly have been that,' he was beginning; 'there is plenty of sporting powder at the palace available for such a purpose'—— And there he checked himself on the verge of the dangerous topic, and cast about for a quick change of subject. Before he found one, the sullen boom of distant thunder came to his rescue.

'Another storm!' exclaimed Mrs Sadleir nervously. 'I will go into the house, I think,' and she disappeared through the adjacent window. Bessie ran to the end of the veranda to report on the aspect of the weather, for in front of them, over the city, the sky was as yet clear.

'It is as black as ink away to the left, and spreading this way,' she cried. 'Ah! there's another flash.'

She had hardly returned to the group and resumed her seat when the rain began to fall, and a minute later the storm broke in its full fury half a mile off along the ridge. From the increasing loudness of each successive peal, it was evident that the disturbance was advancing sideways, and would pass across the city from left to right in a direction parallel with the residency. Already the sky above was densely overcast, and the highly charged air hung heavy on the lungs.

The only timid one of the party having retired, the rest remained in the ample shelter of the broad veranda to watch the progress of the storm. The white walls and minarets of the city glowed every ten seconds in the steel-blue glint of the lightning, as though played upon by a man-of-war search-light, and the thunder boomed incessantly. Suddenly they were surprised to hear amid the din a shriek of wild laughter, and a moment later the Maharajah rushed into the veranda, unannounced, and in a state of gleeful excitement. He was drenched to the skin and panting for breath.

'I run over from palace to see big storm,' he explained, flinging himself into a chair. 'You not mind, Colonel Sahib, eh? Better view from here, you know.'

There was something uncanny in his appearance—something weird in the eager, gloating merriment of the beady eyes, and in the twitching of the flabby face that made them shudder—but it was necessary to extend a welcome. Colonel Sadleir qualified it, however, by adding:

'Your Highness has submitted yourself to rather a needless soaking. You could have seen the storm very well from the palace.'

'Ah, yes—the storm,' was the chuckling answer; 'but not the what-you-call lightning-conductor on roof of magazine. This beastly hill cover him all up from palace so I not see. And it funny—real *tumasha*—when flames dance round pole like zigzag. That why I come.'

A slight movement from his side caused the Colonel to turn. He was just in time to catch a glimpse of Bessie disappearing into the house—to go to her mother, he supposed; for in her more friendly relations with the Maharajah he failed to connect her flight with the latter's arrival. His Highness himself clearly did not claim to be the cause of the girl's departure, since he remarked complacently:

'Miss Bessie frightened of storm? Pity she no wait for grand *tumasha*. So glad I reach here in time.'

But half a minute later it was brought clearly home to him that whatever had moved Bessie to leave them, it was not fear of the weather. The residency, as has been said, stood half-way between the palace and the city, that portion of the road leading citywards being in full view of the veranda. For the first two hundred yards it descended a gentle hill, and for three hundred more ran across the flat as straight as a ruler to the gate of the magazine, thence onwards into the heart of Jettore. Along this road, and as yet but a hundred yards away, Bessie was speeding as though for dear life, her white muslin dress already drenched to a clinging wisp, and her bounding figure showing up elf-like in the lightning flashes.

The others did not realise at first that it was in truth Bessie whom they saw; but the Maharajah recognised her at once, and the effect upon him was as swift as inexplicable. Uttering a strange cry—partly a screech of terror, partly a howl of baffled rage—he rose and rushed away; and the three men, risen now to their feet in wondering concern, heard him dash through the house towards the entrance facing the road. They were still looking at each other in blank dismay when he appeared on the road, running his hardest after the first figure, but a good three hundred yards behind.

'Surely that can't be Bessie ahead of him!' exclaimed the Colonel, and he rushed into the nearest room for a field-glass. When he returned the girl had disappeared through the archway of the magazine, and the Maharajah was still labouring along, sorely hampered by his flowing raiment, in the same direction.

The doctor, in his ignorance, was beginning to derive amusement from the episode; but Sadleir and Morrison were trembling like men on the verge of an unseen precipice, dreading they knew not what. Moved by a common impulse to follow, they were turning away, when a shout from Snelgar arrested them, and turned their attention once more to the long vista of road.

'By Jove! if that is Miss Bessie, she has been playing a game on the magazine *wallahs*,' exclaimed the doctor. 'See! there's a regular stampede.'

It was true enough. Out of the magazine gate came a cluster of natives, jostling and tumbling over each other in frantic haste; and behind them, no less eager to clear the archway, followed the drenched little figure whom Sadleir's glass now told him was indeed his daughter. The native work-people scattered in all directions—mostly fleeing towards the city with cries of alarm that were heard between the thunder-peals—but Bessie came straight back on her tracks for the residency, running like a fawn. Fifty yards from the magazine gate she met the Maharajah, who to the spectators on the veranda seemed to shout to her as he passed, but without stopping, for he kept right on to the magazine. The last they saw of the hereditary ruler of Jettore was a stumpy, white-swathed form, lit up by a lurid lightning-flash, as he vanished through the archway of the deserted building.

'No need to go after her now,' said the Colonel. 'She will be back in a minute at that pace. But what can have come over the child? What is *he* doing?'

'Gone to play with the lightning-conductor, I expect,' suggested the irresponsible doctor. 'If so, he is in for a lively time; the storm will be right over him directly. But here comes Miss Bessie with her explanation of the conundrum.'

She stumbled into the veranda, to sink, dripping wet and well-nigh exhausted, into a chair. To their anxious questions her sole answer was a gesture towards the gate of the magazine, and the gasping cry, 'Has he come out yet?'

They told her no—that the road was clear right up to the gate—and then fell to questioning again. But it was not from the draggled child in the chair that they got their answer—then. A blue, forked bolt shot from the sky, and flickered for the tenth of a second lovingly round the conductor on the magazine; the walls of the building seemed to bulge and crumble; and, with a roar that drowned the thunder, a burst of flame that dimmed the lightning, His Highness the Maharajah's *tumasha* came off. The state of Jettore had lost its stock of powder, and—what was under the circumstances more to the purpose—had also lost the occupant of its throne.

That night, when the turmoil had passed, Bessie explained how her instinctive dislike had grown into active suspicion under what she had chanced to overhear, and how she and the bereaved engine-driver had been on the lookout for eccentricities.

'It was Burton, father, who heard that he had procured a roll of copper wire from the electric-light foreman,' she said. 'We thought he was going to attempt some mischief with the installation; but when he came on to the veranda, with that horrible gloating look on his face, to watch the lightning-conductor in the storm, I thought of what the doctor had just been saying about his secret visit to the magazine. He must have gone there to attach the wire to the conductor and divert it into the powder-room, intending to come here in the next storm to see the explosion. That was the only thing I could think of; so I ran down to warn the workpeople.'

'And what did he say when you passed him on the road?'

'He merely shouted: 'You too much cunning, Miss Bessie. I make it all right—then people think you lie.''

'He must have been doubly a lunatic,' said the Political Agent. 'The fact of his rushing off—I suppose to dismantle his infernal contrivance—would have been enough to condemn him. As things are, it had better be kept dark and go to the world as another "accident;" but none the less are those in the secret proud of you, Bessie, for saving all those poor fellows, at the risk of your life, from a dreadful end.'

'And the state of Jettore from the rule of a homicidal maniac,' said Morrison gravely.

LIVING BAROMETERS.

Amongst recent advances in weather lore, one branch of this subject has received but scant attention. There is a widespread belief in the delicate powers possessed by some animals and plants of predicting the approach of weather changes: it is even said that in some cases these natural barometers seem to be more sensitive than the meteorological instruments in ordinary use. Nor could it be wondered at if the instinct, which the lower animals have acquired throughout long periods of natural selection, of foretelling the coming of the storm that robs them of their food or destroys their home and young, should prove more unerring than the more laborious observations of man.

The power of adaptation to circumstances, which man alone enjoys to its full extent, has rendered it unnecessary that he should know by intuition what the weather of the next few hours may be. But with the lower animals the case is altogether different. Defenceless as they are against the ravages of the storm, and powerless to combat the fury of the elements, it is often to them a matter of life or death should their instinct fail to warn them of approaching danger. This gift has no doubt been an important factor in determining the survival of the fittest: it has given its possessors an advantage over their less fortunate competitors.

The gift may, however, be less mysterious than it at first sight appears. The president of the Royal Meteorological Society, in a long discourse on 'Weather Fallacies,' printed in the Society's *Quarterly Journal* this year, while not affirming that all indications derived *as to the future* from plants and animals are fallacious, practically asserted that most of those examined by scientific experts had broken down. The actions relied on as indications of future changes, indicate directly only what the animals at that moment feel, not what they feel is coming. If they act in a special way before rain comes, that is simply, he believes, because they feel uneasy by reason of actual chilliness or dampness; but in fact such dampness may precede still wetter weather. So with plants: they act in accordance with the weather conditions actually prevailing—conditions which, in many cases, precede greater changes, so that valuable hints may be derived from these sources.

The restlessness of domestic animals on the approach of rainy weather has given rise to many a well-worn household proverb. Cats and dogs are given to scratching and other uneasy movements, while their fur looks less bright and glossy; horses and cattle stretch their necks and sniff the air; sheep become frolicsome, or turn their backs to the wind, with frequent quarrels; goats bleat incessantly and leave the hill-tops for more sheltered spots; pigs run uneasily about, carrying straw to the sty, and no longer wallow in the mud and mire; fowls huddle together in the farm-yard, with drooping wings, and the air is filled with the clamorous cackle of geese and ducks. When Louis XI., astonished at the remarkable accuracy of the charcoal-burner's weather predictions, curiously asked the cause, he learned that the real prophet was the man's donkey, which always hung his ears forward and rubbed his back against the wall on the approach of rain.

But although domestic animals are undoubtedly sensitive to changes, present or coming, in the weather, it is amongst the wilder creatures that we find this power in its fullest extent. Moles become more active in digging; stoats and weasels become unusually restless and uneasy; rats and mice run noisily about in the house walls; and the hedgehog fortifies his cave against the coming storm with an unfailing prevision which has earned for this strange little animal quite a reputation amongst weather prophets.

Wild birds suffer much from inclement seasons, and might therefore be expected to have an unusually delicate perception of unfavourable atmospheric conditions. In addition to the accurate knowledge of the change of seasons which is indispensable to habits of migration, keen sensitiveness to weather conditions is abundantly shown in the daily habits of birds both large and small. Rooks and swallows, instead of taking their customary distant flight, remain near home when a tempest is brewing; sea-gulls no longer venture out to sea, but hover over the fields or fly inland when wind and rain are near; swallows and martins fly low and skim the water; herons seem doubtful where to rest; and the robin broods, melancholy, in the bush, or seeks the shelter of a neighbouring roof. Stormy petrels have long established their claim to consideration by mariners as weather guides, owing to their invariable habit of collecting in the wake of ships before a storm. There are some, however, who ascribe this behaviour of Mother Carey's chickens rather to the superstitious imagination of sailors than to the weather wisdom of the bird itself.

Even aquatic animals are alleged to be affected by the approach of atmospheric changes. It is said that porpoises and dolphins swim to windward on the approach of rough weather, and sailors look with misgivings upon the sports and gambols of these unwieldy creatures as they circle round their ships when the sea is calm. The variable prospects of the angler according to the height of the barometer is in itself sufficient proof of the effect of the weather upon the inhabitants of our lakes and rivers. It is an interesting fact that the earliest suggestion of storm warnings for our coasts was that of Dr Merryweather, at the Great Exhibition of 1851, where he showed a living barometer, consisting of bottled leeches, which rang little bells by an ingenious contrivance when a storm was at hand. His proposal to establish a system of leech barometers at our principal seaport towns was never carried into effect, and sounds somewhat ludicrous at the present day. The president of the Meteorological Society evidently expects us to find it difficult to believe that the scheme was propounded seriously. Yet there appears to be a good foundation in fact for the connection between the weather and the behaviour of the leech. When placed in a bottle partly filled with water, a leech is said to remain coiled up at the bottom before the coming of fine, cold weather; but it rises to the top of the bottle, sticking on the glass above the level of the water, when it is going to rain. It is said to become restless on the approach of electrical disturbances.

A similar use was commonly made of frogs in Germany and Switzerland. A small green variety was kept in a glass vessel half full of water, into which a miniature ladder descended. The frog sat high and dry upon the steps in expectation of cold and wet, but remained in the water when there was a promise of sunshine. Reptiles, also, which remain torpid during the winter have this weather sensitiveness in a marked degree. Eastern superstition has even endowed snakes with power over wind and rain.

In the insect world, too, similar instincts seem to exist. The 'rain-beetle' of Bedfordshire, a long-bodied member of the large family of beetles, has acquired its name from the supposed association of its appearance with the coming of wet weather. That a bee was never caught in a shower is a familiar belief arising from the habit which this insect has acquired of remaining at home when unfavourable weather is threatening. Ants, wasps, and spiders exhibit the most watchful anxiety for the approach of inclement seasons, and in the disposition of their nests, eggs, or webs they utilise to the utmost their acquired faculty of guarding against wind and rain. Indolence in spiders is believed to be a certain sign of bad weather, for they seldom change their web unless it is going to be fine, and they make the frame-lines of their webs unusually short, to meet the resistance of a rising wind.

Such precautionary instincts and prophetic powers as animals possess are, as has already been stated, the natural outcome of a necessity for self-preservation. In the case of plant-life, although provisions for the safety and dispersion of the species are equally necessary, we do not find this protective power against bad weather to so marked an extent. There is also a difference between the habits of plants and the instinct of animals. But certain plants are capable of giving weather indications of considerable accuracy and value.

The pink-eyed pimpernel, the 'Poor Man's Weather-glass,' as it is often called, is so sensitive to atmospheric changes that it shuts up its petals in the damp air which precedes rain, and is widely relied upon, before all other weather signs, by the British ploughman. This peculiarity is also possessed by other common wild-flowers, such as the wood-anemone, or wind-flower, the chickweed, convolvulus, and gentian. The burnet saxifrage and the chickweed even go so far as to half open their flowers again if the rain is soon to cease. The African marigold, which closes its petals regularly at nightfall, fails to reopen them in the morning if the weather is damp.

Not only the flowers, but also the leaves of some plants give warnings of approaching change. Pliny states that the clover bristles and erects its leaves before a storm; and Virgil has described the signs of coming weather given by the leaves of the almond-tree. The wild liquorice plant (*Abrus precatorius*), the so-called weather plant, is said to hang its leaves horizontally for a change, upwards for fine weather, and drooping for rain. This fact was called attention to in 1892; but the Kew observers who have specially studied it say the only movements discernible are due to the direct agency of light, heat, and moisture. In the United States it is a common saying that the leaves of the sugar-maple turn upside down before a storm, while the silver-maple shows the white lining of its leaf. In our own country, the wood-sorrel, lime, poplar, sycamore, and plane trees vary the direction of their leaves with different conditions of the atmosphere.

The well-known saying which attempts to determine the weather of the coming summer by the priority of the oak or ash in the development of leaf-buds has probably no more foundation in fact than belongs to the natural characteristics of these trees. In this country the oak is usually in leaf before the ash, and in so moist a climate the early summer is more often wet than dry.

According to modern meteorology, the greater part of the storms which traverse these islands are of the cyclonic type, in which there is always a well-defined distribution of atmospheric temperature and pressure. The front of an advancing cyclone is marked by a damp muggy atmosphere, with a general depressing effect upon the nervous system of man himself. It is not surprising that the lower animals should feel it also. The heaviness of the air renders the scent of flowers, and other odours, more apparent, and explains the habit of sniffing the air displayed by many animals before a storm. The excessive dampness of the atmosphere, by its influence on cutaneous perspiration, accounts for much of the restlessness and feeling of discomfort which so many of the fur and feather tribe betray during the passage of a cyclone across our islands. The animal skin, and also its appendages, are peculiarly affected by the humidity of the air. The Zuñi Indians of New Mexico were wont to predict rain from the appearance of the scalp-locks captured from their enemies. The fur of animals, the moist skins of toads and frogs, and the plumage of birds are very sensitive to small variations in the hygrometric state of the atmosphere.

Dampness has also a marked effect upon many vegetable tissues. If a beard of wild oat is fixed upon a stand, it twists itself up more or less according to the amount of water vapour present in the atmosphere. Pine cones can be used in a similar manner as natural hygrometers, closing up their scales in damp weather, and expanding them when the air is dry. The leaf-stalks of plants are softened by damp, causing the leaves to droop or hang unnaturally. The sensitive plant, mimosa, exhibits increased irritability in the warm, moist air of a cyclone front; and even the downy hairs of dandelions, thistles, and colt's-foot contract and expand under the ever-varying influence of atmospheric vapour.

Here, then, is the explanation of the movements of plants described above. The ploughman's weather-glass need lose none of its efficiency because its mysterious sensibility is thus accounted for: it tells us actual conditions, which, rightly understood, may be capable of interpretation as signifying changes to come.

After the cyclone front has passed away, the air becomes dry and bracing, and a feeling of exhilaration pervades the whole of creation. Sea-birds fly out far to seaward, rooks and kites soar aloft in the air, insects float in the light breeze in search of honey-dew, and plants expand their leaves boldly to the sun. The confidence of all nature is restored, for the dangers of the storm are over.

PROOF POSITIVE.

By David Christie Murray, Author of *Joseph's Coat; Aunt Rachel; The Way of the World*, &c.

CHAPTER I.

It was the Professor himself, and no other.

He was standing at the corner of the street beneath a lamp-post, and though his head was so far bent downward as to set his face in complete shadow, I recognised him by the queer old Noah's Ark coat he always wore, and the shapelessly picturesque, unmistakable old hat. I stopped my hurried walk within three yards of him, but he gave no sign of any knowledge of my presence.

The night was extraordinarily cold for London—the thermometer actually indicated zero—and the wind blew in ill-tempered gusts which sent an icy shiver through my younger blood, though I was stoutly wrapped against the weather, and had walked swiftly. At intervals between the blasts a fine dusty snow was falling. The sky was as black as ink, and it would have been hard to picture to the mind a scene more desolate than this suburban street corner. Yet here was the Professor within thirty yards of his own cosy fireside, standing alone and dreaming wide awake, without knowledge of the frowning night. I made absolutely sure of him, and then, advancing, touched him on the shoulder.

'Professor! Dr Zeck!'

He started and stared at me as if I had been a stranger, but in a minute the beautiful infantile smile with which he always greeted his friends shone in his face, and he stretched out his hand towards me.

'It is you, Alwayne?' he said. A shiver ran through him from head to foot, and his teeth chattered as he spoke. 'But, by Heavens!' he added, hugging himself with both arms, 'it is cold.'

'You are waiting for some one?' I asked him.

'Nein!' said the Professor; 'I wait for nobody. I was thinking, that is all.'

I gave him my arm, and we moved towards his house together. He walked stiffly, as if cramped by cold, and twice or thrice he shivered strongly.

'Come,' I said, quickening my pace a little, and almost dragging him forward. 'This will not do. This absent-mindedness of yours will be the death of you some day. How long were you standing there, dreaming in the cold?'

'That,' he said, shivering so violently that he could not walk, 'I cannot tell you.'

His teeth rattled like dice in a box, and with a momentary but genuine fear of his condition I put one arm about his waist, and half carried, half supported him to his own door. There I sounded a noisy peal at the bell, and (this being answered at once) in less than a minute I had the old gentleman in his own warm arm-chair before the fire. I ordered hot coffee for him, and when it came, I gave him a stiff dose of cognac with the first cup. By-and-by, under the influence of this timely stimulant, and the restoring warmth of the room, he grew quite comfortable again, and the colour came back to his face, which was at first so leaden in its hue as to fill me with alarm.

'Ah!' he said, 'that is better. Do you know, Alwayne, I am very much of an old fool?'

'Well, no, Professor,' I responded; 'I have never thought that of you. But you need to be looked after. What were you so absorbed in when I came up with you?'

'A little experiment I tried this morning,' he answered mildly. 'I will show you of it in a day or two. It failed to-day, but I think I have him by the tail.'

There he smiled again, in his own childlike, lovable way, and fell to chafing his hands above the fire.

'Give me my pipe, Alwayne, that is a good fellow. You are thanked. What should I have done had you not awakened me? Should I have stood still to freeze? Do you know?—my grandfather was the same sort of old fool that I am. He was a great man, my grandfather, but a dreamer. I used to see him in my youth so buried in his own thoughts that you might have fired cannon about him without result. I used to envy that self-absorption. I used to say, "What would I give to live so absolutely in my own thoughts?" And now that I do it, and cannot help doing it, it is no boon. It is pure wool-gathering half the time, and I pass for a silly old man. Eh?'

I made no answer, for my mind was full of other matter. But when he had packed the big porcelain bowl, had lit his pipe, and leaned back in his chair, puffing with an aspect of twinkling enjoyment, he asked me a question which gave me an opening for what I had in my heart to say.

'Where were you going, Alwayne, when we met just now?'

'I was coming here, sir.' I faltered, and my heart began to beat thickly. He must have caught something curious in the tone, for he looked up and took his pipe from his lips with awaked attention.

'For any special purpose?' he asked.

'For a very special purpose,' I responded. I took my courage in both hands and stumbled on. 'I have been through my books to-night. I find that my practice is increasing in a steady ratio. In the last year I have earned two thousand pounds!'

'Good!' he said emphatically; 'Good!'

'This,' I continued, 'is an income on which I can venture to marry. Apart from inclination, marriage is a prudent thing for a medical man of thirty.'

'Undoubtedly,' said the Professor, emitting a great cloud of smoke. 'Prudent, if the choice be prudent.'

'I have made up my mind about the choice, sir, these two years past. I came here to-night to ask your permission to offer myself to your grand-daughter.'

'God in heaven!' said the Professor in his native tongue. It was spoken so queerly that to my nervous fancy it sounded like an unqualified, amazed rejection, but in another second the old man was shaking me warmly by the hand. 'My dear Alwayne, I have loved you this fifteen years,' he said with much warmth and feeling, 'ever since you virst game to me to study ghemisdry.' He was very German for a moment in his excitement, but he cooled down almost at once, and after a renewed hand-shake he walked back to the chair he had quitted, and sat there, his pipe pendent from his lips, a hand on either knee, and his face one cordial, delighted beam.

'I am flattered by your kindness,' I began, but he spread out both hands against me.

'You have any idea?' he asked. 'You have not spoken to her? Listen! that is she.'

A ring sounded at the front door, and in a minute the room was bright and terrible with the presence of my beloved. Anybody is welcome to laugh at the words. They are true.

How sweet she looked, with her hair just powdered with snow, and the white woollen cloud she wore setting off the rich colour of her cheek! Her eyes shone like twin stars, and the frosty wind outside had fanned her beauty to an astonishing brightness.

'Oh,' she said pantingly, 'such a struggle home! I have been only a dozen doors away, and I had to fight to get here. The wind blows like a hurricane, and the snow is blinding.'

The Professor arose, laid down his pipe, walked round the centre table to where she stood, and took her in his arms and kissed her.

'Stay here!' he said. 'Alwayne has something to say to you.'

She looked at me with some surprise, and her colour altered. The old man left the room, and we both stood embarrassed. She had half thrown off the woollen cloud of white which had obscured her head, and her beautiful chestnut hair was a little disordered. Her eyes were shy, and their lids were heavy. She had no courage to look at me, and I gathered fire from her shyness, and passing round the table, took her unresisting hands in both mine, and spoke to her.

'Kathryn,' I said, 'I have just asked your grandfather if he would be willing to see me your husband. I have his full consent to speak to you. I have loved you for years. I have waited for years. I have worked all the while to be able to speak to you. Now I can offer you a home if you will share it with me. Can you care for me at all, Kathryn?'

She laughed shyly and happily. She made no pretence of coyness.

'I care a good deal,' she said.

'Do you care enough to be my wife?' I asked her.

She looked up, and her beautiful eyes met mine. The rich blood was mantling in her cheeks again, and I drank the warm fragrance of her breath. I drew her hands nearer to me and sideways, outward, and she swayed towards me until her lips touched mine. I took her in my arms, and I covered her with kisses until she escaped from me.

'Oh, for shame!' she said, 'to use a poor girl so! Look at my hair.'

It was indeed in such delicious disorder, that I should have been less, or more, than human if I had not kissed her again. But at this she fairly ran away from me, and I heard her silvery voice, as clear as ever, but with a sort of ringing tremor, calling: 'Grandpapa! Mr Alwayne has something to say to you.'

This was followed by a little laugh, which spoke a thousand things of happiness and shyness to my heart, and then with a soft storm of rustling skirts she ran up-stairs to her own room. The Professor came to me with open eyes, wondering, as it turned out afterwards, what had broken up this conference so quickly. In the very midst of the excess of my delight, I was conscious of looking embarrassed and absurd. I shook that feeling off, however, and I took the dear old man by the hand. I had always loved him and revered him, but never had such a full sun of friendship warmed my breast. I could have thrown my arms about him and hugged him to my heart.

'She is mine, Professor.' That was all I had the wit to say.

'Good!' he answered, shaking my hand hard; 'good! I would not have had it otherwise. You are a good fellow, Alwayne—a good man. For Kathryn, no better girl was ever born. Ah, to-night, my friend, how she shone upon me like her mother! Her sacred mother, my dear Alwayne. She is with God these many years. She went before my wife. And sometimes, they are all so alike, I forget. I could almost dream that I am not an old man, and that Kathryn is the little girl I made love to so very long ago.'

He was moved to tears, and he made no disguise. He mopped his eyes unaffectedly, and then having blown his nose with a stentorian sound, he took up his pipe and relit it, and leaned back, smiling, in his chair. The moisture in his eyes made his smile more child-like and bright and endearing than I had ever seen it. My own happiness at that moment was so warm and tender that I had no resistance this time for the impulse which overcame me. I stooped above him and kissed his cheek.

'You won't lose your grand-daughter,' I said. 'There will be room for all of us, and my dear old master shall have a lifelong welcome.'

He pressed my hand in answer, and with a tap at the door before she entered, Kathryn was back again.

'I am going to the kitchen,' she said, thrusting her head round the door, and laughing and blushing at once with an exquisite prettiness. Her happiness made my heart ache with joy. It was the certainty of my love which lent that new charm to her beauty. She had loved me. I divined it all with a pleasure which was pain. She had loved me long before I had spoken, and now our hearts and our wills were one. It was all as real as the solid earth, and yet, I had a fear lest I might awaken and prove it a dream. 'I am going to the kitchen,' said Kathryn, laughing and blushing and shy and saucy in the same breath. 'For grandpapa will allow no one else to make his omelette. You shall have some if you're good —Robert.' It was the first time she had ever called me by my Christian name; and there was something so captivating in the grace of it, it was done with so rosy and harmless and dimpled a mischief, that if I had not been fathoms deep in love already, I should have dived at that instant. 'Sans adieu!' she said, nodding to each of us, and so was gone, leaving me staring at the blank door as if heaven had gone from my gaze.

That 'Robert' was like a gift of herself. It was as if she had hidden the name in her breast till then, and dared now to own it for the first time.

The Professor had very simple and old-fashioned habits. He dined at two, took tea at six, and supped an hour or two before going to bed. I had often sat at these innocent banquets—these nine o'clock regales of fish or omelette or the like—some simple, inexpensive thing which it was Kathryn's delight to prepare for the old man's enjoyment. He had but one costly taste. His cellar held the best Berncastler I ever saw poured, and he took a glass or two of it at supper-time unfailingly.

'Come!' he said. 'We will commemorate this great hour, Alwayne. I will ring for a candle, and you shall light me to the cellar. There is one dozen such wine—well, I will not boast. Emperors drink it, kings and kaisers, and among common men I am the sole possessor. I saved the life of the grower, and ever since, for fifty years now, I have had my yearly half-dozen—my tribute. Come! We will fetch out the oldest of them all.'

The maid had entered whilst he was still speaking, and she now returned with a lighted candle, which she left upon the table. I led the way which I had travelled many a hundred times before, for the bringing up of the bottle thrice a week or so had been my duty when I had lived with the Professor as his pupil, and the old man, chatting excitedly, followed in my footsteps. By some little bit of ignorance or carelessness the way to the bin had been blocked by a heap of dusty firewood, and we had to clear all this away before we could get at the precious vintage on the lower shelves. We made merry over this, but we grew very grimy in the process both of us, and on our return to the sitting-room, each laughed at the other's aspect.

'This is soon removed,' said the Professor. 'Come up-stairs.'

I followed him, and when we had made ourselves presentable once more, he laid a hand upon my shoulder, and said rather gravely that he would like to show me something. He led me to another apartment which I knew at once must belong to Kathryn, and for a moment I hesitated to stay in it, for my mere presence there seemed almost like a desecration of its virginal privacy. It was beautifully ordered everywhere, and there was an odour of lavender which reminded me tenderly of its occupant. The Professor took the candle from my hand and moved before me.

'I do not earn much of late years,' he said, 'but I spend so little. One of these days this will be yours, Alwayne, and even if I am not proud, I do not like you to think that Kathryn is portionless.'

I noticed an iron safe let solidly into the wall. It proved to be without a key, for, when the Professor laid a hand upon the brass knob of the door, it yielded to the tug he gave it, and opened. He took from it an unlocked common cash-box, and showed me layer upon layer of Bank of England notes.

'There are four thousand pounds there,' he said simply, as he closed the box and returned it to the safe. 'That is for Kathryn when I am gone.'

'But surely,' I said, 'it is unwise to keep so large a sum of money in so unprotected a place. The safe-door is open.'

'Ah!' the Professor answered with his innocent smile, 'I have lost the key. That is my fault. But nobody knows of it except Kathryn and myself. The two servants have been with us for years, and are as honest as the day. There is no danger.'

'Surely it would be safer to send it to the bank,' I urged him.

'I daresay,' he answered carelessly. 'It can go,' he added. 'There is no reason why it should not go. It is the saving of my life. Whenever I have had money I did not want, I have put it there. Some of it is there for forty years.'

I might have given him the advantage of a little business common-sense on this matter, if he had not told me that one day the money would come to Kathryn, who, many years before that happened, would, I hoped, be my wife. That consideration kept me silent, but it seemed a pity to have kept money unproductive and idle all that time.

We went down-stairs together, and by-and-by Kathryn summoned us to the dining-room, and there, with her own hands, served the omelette she had made. The Professor himself uncorked the precious bottle and poured out the wine, and we all three touched glasses and drank.

'I made songs once,' said the Professor, 'when I was young and foolish. I made a song about this wine:

'Not a moonbeam ever fell
On the stream I know so well,
But the wine has kept its spell.

'Never lover strolled along
Moselle's leafy woods among,
But the wine preserves his song.

'There was more of it, but I forget. But all the kindly Moselle valley, all the pretty stream, and the green banks, and the quiet little towns, and the girls and the boys with their pretty little fancies—they are all in that bottle. Eh?'

It was a happy hour, and I can see Kathryn yet as if she were actually before me in all the guileless pride and beauty of her youth. It was a happy hour, and it came to an end. I had to rise at last, and make ready to go; but Kathryn was afraid of the night, and prophesied that I should never reach home. She accompanied me into the hall to say good-bye, and how shall I ever forget the joy and sorrow of that parting? It was hard to leave her for an instant. It was hard to surrender such a rapture as her presence gave me.

At length I took my last farewell and threw open the door. The blast drove me back, and my head came into unpleasant contact with the wall of the corridor. The snow rushed beating in, in flakes as large as a child's hand, and in a mere instant the floor of the passage was covered to the depth of an inch or more by the blowing in of the drift which had piled itself outside.

'Close the door!' cried Kathryn, and I set myself to do it, but the wind blew so fiercely that she had to come to my assistance. The inrushing tempest had tumbled half-a-dozen objects in the hall, and amongst the rest had thrown down an engraving and a weather-glass. The tumult brought out the old Professor, who looked about him with amazement.

'You must sleep here to-night, Alwayne,' he said. 'It is not a night to turn out a dog.'

I made some little objection, but I was overruled, and, to tell the truth, I was not sorry to be housed. I was three miles from home, and that blinding storm would have cleared the streets of every vehicle. There was a little bustle whilst the corridor was swept and the debris which bestrewed it cleared away, and then Kathryn ran off to superintend the preparations of my chamber, which had not been occupied for years. She came down with laughing reports of a smoking chimney, and as she opened the door I had a sight of the two females of the household in the act of mounting the stairs, the one carrying a great pile of blankets, and the other a heap of folded bed-linen.

Then, when all the preparations were completed, we had a quiet half-hour together, which, to me, was like a bit of heaven. We separated for the night, but the old man came to my room and sat with me. By-and-by we heard Kathryn's voice calling softly at the door of his room.

'I am here, my dreasure,' said the Professor, opening the door. 'What is it you want?'

'You will find all that carbon paper on the chest of drawers,' she answered. 'It blackens everything that touches it, and I want to take it away to my own room.'

'Good!' said the Professor, 'I will bring it to you. I have been teaching my little girl how to take carbon prints of the skeletons of leaves,' he explained. 'You know the process? No. It is very simple. See.' He held up against the light a skeleton leaf of exquisite filmy texture, like the very finest lace. 'You prepare your paper with sweet-oil and candle smoke. That is plain enough, eh? You macerate your leaves in water until nothing but the skeleton is left. You rub your skeleton leaf on the carbon, so. You transfer it to a sheet of clean paper, so. Then you rub again, and you have a print of the leaf. A pretty toy, eh?'

'Kathryn is waiting,' I said, and the Professor, gathering all the blackened sheets and the white-leaved book and the skeleton leaves together, carried them out to her. She took them from him, and smiled a last good-night to me.

I did not see her again for many terrible and agonised years, and but for those sheets of carbonised paper, I should never to the day of my death have known what it was that parted us.

A RESUSCITATED INDUSTRY.

The establishment of a new industry is rightly regarded as a matter of considerable congratulation; but the benefits derivable from the revival of an old one can scarcely be said to rank lower in the scale of the commercial life of any community. Bearing this fact in mind, no small importance and interest attach themselves to the vigorous efforts recently put forth to resuscitate the ancient Irish charcoal iron industries.

Ireland in prehistoric times was noted for the superior quality of its iron, and it has even been suggested that the famous oriental steel of Phœnician times had its origin in iron 'made in Ireland.' Be this as it may, Irish iron bore a high reputation in Strongbow's times, and portions of an iron-work of that date have recently been discovered between Rathdrum and Aughrim. Turning to more modern times, Chichester reports having found native smiths at work in Ulster at the beginning of the present century, fashioning steel from native iron. The industry seems to have succumbed through sheer lack of fuel; the woods were not replaced, and as they disappeared, so did the iron furnaces. The iron ore remains in abundance, and the problem has been to find fuel for its reduction.

Not unnaturally, attention has been paid for a considerable time to the extensive peat-bogs of Ireland with a view to their utilisation for iron-smelting purposes; but until recently, no success has rewarded the efforts made. Hitherto, experimenters have worked on the theory that raw peat should be compressed to form a good merchantable article; and a large number and a great variety of machines have been patented and invented to carry out this idea. Peat, however, is a curious substance, and its tenacity of water and general india-rubber-like character have rendered futile all attempts to reduce it by pressure to a solid and dry compact mass.

In view of these repeated failures, a new process in which the water is evaporated and thus disposed of, and the by-products distilled, leaving a residuum of 'peat charcoal,' which can be formed into blocks, and burns as an excellent fuel, merits considerable attention. The by-products, which consist of ammoniacal liquor, acetic acid, spirits of naphtha, and volatile oils, are valuable, and command a ready market. In this connection, it may be pointed out that peat possesses the great advantage of being entirely free from sulphur, a substance, as is well known, most injurious to the quality of iron.

Without unduly entering at length into the minutiæ of the new plant, it may briefly be stated that the apparatus consists of horizontal retorts of steel set in brickwork, with flues in the form of a triangle. Inside each retort a specially constructed screw propeller is placed, actuated by external gearing. Channels for feeding in the peat, and pipes for conveying away the products of distillation, are also provided. The retorts are arranged in groups of three, and the peat in its passage through them, under the process of distillation, yields up its volatile parts, and is finally ejected by the propellers as charcoal. The charcoal powder then passes automatically into an improved 'briquette' machine, which compresses it into blocks suitable for melting iron ores in the blast furnace.

Every effort to economise waste products and utilise all sources of heat will be made; and it is proposed to convey the gases evolved in the blast furnaces during the smelting of the iron back to the retorts, both for drying the peat and heating the retorts.

The various expedients proposed for the development of the use of peat and the resuscitation of the ancient Irish iron industry, have been carefully examined by a number of experts, the whole of whom have presented reports of an entirely favourable nature. Over a thousand acres, estimated to contain more than eight million tons of ironstone, have been secured on the Creevelea estate, in the Barony of Drumahair, County Leitrim, where ample water-power can be obtained from three lakes, seven hundred feet above the level of the works, and yielding an abundant supply for the one hundred and fifty horse-power turbines it is proposed to erect.

The peat on the property covers at least six hundred acres, varying in depth from six to twelve feet, and being a good heavy black turf, with but little fibre, and suitable in every way for the purpose to which it is destined. It only remains to be added that peat is employed on the Continent for the manufacture of iron, and that at Königsbronn, in Würtemberg, both the refining and second fusion of pig-iron, as well as its reheating for rolling and puddling, are performed solely by peat.

The late Sir John Anderson devoted his attention to investigating the quality of iron manufactured by means of peat, and found it to be in all respects of a very superior kind; whilst at the Mersey Steel Works, peat-smelted iron behaved admirably under a series of particularly severe trials.

Enough has been said to demonstrate that a very determined effort is being made to enlist new apparatus and fresh appliances in the revival of an industry which at one time brought considerable prosperity to Ireland. These, it is to be hoped, may, under the guidance of the engineer, the metallurgist, and the chemist, succeed in again establishing as a commercial and industrial success an important branch of manufacture, which has unhappily lain dormant for many generations.

THE NOVELIST.

THE man with a head for a tale,
Who trusts to his fancy for bread,
Will find even fancy bread fail
When he hasn't a tale in his head;

When he has, he must toil on his plot
With an 'Ah, but this writing is woe!'
And envy his easier lot
Who works on his plot with a hoe.

What wonder an author should mope
When (the metaphor's simple and neat)
He must 'climb on his head' in the hope
That he one day may fall on his feet!

If Fate on his hope never shines,
In vain all his wrongs he may write;
Though he skilfully puts out his lines,
He will starve while he waits for a bite.

And if he succeeds—what is Fame?
Though a lion he roars among men,
At home he is plodding and tame,
And goes like a sheep to his pen.

A. ST JOHN ADCOCK.

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SOME ENGLISH GHOSTS.

Although little more than a century has elapsed since Dr Johnson died, the astounding strides made in the sciences of enlightening the ignorant and refining the unrefined during that period do not seem to have nullified to an appreciable degree the best part of his *dictum* to the effect that 'All argument is against the appearance to the living of the spirits of the dead; all belief is for it.'

No doubt during these hundred and odd years a great many time-honoured ghosts have been hunted from their haunts by the prosaic influences of modern life and the unsparing broom of practical common sense; no doubt there are fewer educated people who believe in ghosts than when London crowded to Cock Lane one hundred and thirty years ago; no doubt the village Hampden is prompter nowadays to tackle mysterious nocturnal visitors than of yore. Yet he who wanders through rural England—preferably on foot, for he is then enabled to penetrate by-ways and sequestered nooks and corners not attainable on wheels—cannot fail to be impressed by the sturdy vitality of so many old ghosts.

As a rule, he does not meet men who have actually seen ghosts, for a sneaking sort of self-respect seems to stop Hodge's admission of the fact; but he meets many men who know men who have seen ghosts, and multitudes who have heard that a ghost is to be seen at such and such a place, and who will not commit themselves to a denial of its existence. As for the prejudice against lonely places on dark nights, it is not merely general but universal, just as the profession of disbelief in ghosts amongst educated people is universal.

No one district of England seems to be particularly patronised by ghosts, although naturally one meets them more frequently in counties which are of lonely and romantic character, or which possess romantic histories, than within the metropolitan area. Ghost-hunting may be accounted an idle and unworthy pursuit, yet it is not altogether unprofitable, as ghost legends are not infrequently the channels through which historical facts have been passed down to us which would otherwise have been lost, and, moreover, are illustrative of the fact that the *auri sacra fames* has not quite knocked all sentiment and imagination out of the English people.

Well, there is at any rate one ghost in London, for the first Lord Holland is said to walk the Sir Joshua Room in Holland House with his head in his hand—a very fashionable ghostly proceeding—on certain nights of the year; and it is a known fact that there are many houses which never have been let, never are let, and never will be let for any length of time on account of uncanny traditions associated with them. The people who take these houses are ready enough to stay, but no servants will stay, and so they are driven elsewhere.

We may be pretty sure that there are not many people in modern suburbanised Kingston who believe in the time-hallowed tradition that on All Souls Night the dead walk on Kingston Bridge; but no stranger to Epsom was ever shown Pit Place by a native without being told the 'Wicked' Lord Lyttelton's ghost-story—the white bird which fluttered at his window on the night of November 24, 1779, changing into a white-robed woman, who approached the foot of his bed and told him that he would be dead in three days, which actually happened.

Sussex, which of all the home counties has retained its old characteristics the most, has a good many ghosts who are still realities in the eyes of the rustics of that little-visited district, which was once the centre of England's iron industry. There is old Oxenbridge of Brede Place. There is the headless man of St Leonard's Forest, known as Squire Paulett, who jumps upon the crupper of a horseman entering the forest, and remains there until clear of it. There is the Drummer of Hurstmonceaux. Black dogs—a favourite shape assumed by ghosts all over England—haunt all dark lanes and lone by-roads, and under many a sequestered wooden bridge a headless woman may be seen spinning; whilst on the old cattle-road between Kingston, near Lewes, and the Marshes, known as the Drove Way, a goblin may be seen on any dark, wild night, incessantly spinning charcoal!

The same species of 'general' ghosts, as they may be called, is recorded by Mr Rye, the Norfolk topographer, to be strongly developed in his county. There is the pale, long-haired woman, who runs shrieking amongst the pits on Aylmerton Heath. There is the great black 'Shuck Dog'—the word 'Shuck' said to mean the Devil—who at Coltishall Bridge is headless, and at Salhouse has a blazing eye in the centre of his forehead, and who has a brother at Peel Castle in the Isle of Man, the spirit of a murdered prisoner, known as the Mauthe Dog. But the historical ghosts are more interesting objects of study. In this same county of Norfolk, says Mr Rye, young Lord Dacre, who was murdered in 1565 by his guardian, Sir Richard Fulmerston, who arranged that a rocking-horse on which the boy sat should fall, still prances about on a (headless, of course) rocking-horse. Anne Boleyn still rides down the avenue of Blickling Park, once a year, in a hearse-like coach, drawn by four headless horses, and driven by a headless driver, with her head in her lap; and her father, Sir Thomas, does the same thing. At Caistor Castle there is another coach and headless team, and yet another near Great Melton. This last rises from a pool every mid-day and midnight, and with its load of four headless, dripping, white-robed ladies, passes slowly round the field and sinks again; and tradition says that at this spot, long ago, a bridal party were upset into this pool and never seen again.

Then there is the Gray Lady of Rainham—not to be confounded with the Brown Lady of Rainham in Durham—who represents Lady Dorothy Walpole, forced, it is said, to marry Lord Townsend in 1713; and the ghost of one Lush, who committed suicide and was buried near Redenhall; and many others.

A firmly believed in coach-ghost is that of Lady Howard, daughter and heiress of Sir John Fitz of Fitzford, in Devonshire, about 1600, who, Mr Baring-Gould says, travels nightly from Okehampton Castle to Fitzford Gate, Tavistock, in a coach of bones, preceded by a phantom dog. The Devonshire folk believe this to be the subject of the quaint, weird ballad of 'My Ladye's Coach,' which opens:

> My Ladye hath a sable coach,
> And horses two and four;
> My Ladye hath a gaunt bloodhound,
> That runneth on before.
> My Ladye's coach hath nodding plumes,
> The driver hath no head;
> My Ladye is as ashen white
> As one that long is dead.

But, as Mr Baring-Gould says in his Introduction to the *Songs of the West*, the Ladye of the ballad, no doubt, personifies Death.

Gabriel Craddock is a well-known Essex ghost. He was famous in the middle of the last century as Jerry Lynch the highwayman, who with the proceeds of his exploits built Lapwater Hall, near Leigh, so called because, upon the application of the workmen for drink, he bid them 'lap water.' He was run to earth in his new house, wounded, and drowned in the pond to which he had directed the thirsty workmen's attention, and he is still believed to be seen on wild nights, bandy-legged, and mounted on an earless mare, fleeing from his pursuers as they came from Shenfield, Ingrave, Horndon, Laindon, and Pitsea.

Mannington Hall, the residence of the Walpoles, Earls of Orford, has its ghostly associations. Horatio, second earl, removed all the tombstones of the Scalmers, the former possessors of the Hall, from Wickmere Church, and one of the buried ladies is still believed to walk round the churchyard. To atone for the sacrilege, every Earl of Orford at his burial was driven in his hearse three times round ruined Wickmere Church before being finally laid to rest.

Very well known is the stile at Littlecote, near Marlborough, on the old Bath Road, whereat Wild Darrell, the principal in the terribly weird tragedy at Littlecote Hall, is still believed to be seen, followed by his howling hounds, as on the day when he met his death here—riding madly along, reckless in his conscience torture, and confronted by the apparition of a babe burning in a flame.

All the unhappy ladies of history 'walk:' Ann of Cleves paces up and down the gallery bearing her name in Hever Castle; Fair Rosamond walks on the river-bank at Godstow; Amy Robsart on the side of Cumnor; Mary, Queen of Scots, at Fotheringhay. We have noted Anne Boleyn's procedure at Blickling. Canterbury King's School boys faithfully believe, until they attain that age of absolute wisdom when no creeds are tolerated except that in self, that the unfortunate Nell Cook, famous in the Ingoldsby legend, haunts the Dark Entry every Friday night. At Apethorpe, the Earl of Westmoreland's seat in Northamptonshire, Lady Grace, wife of the first earl, walks in a corridor, scattering silver pennies as she goes; but the pennies are air, and woe to him who tries to test their solidity—so say, and probably believe, the good folk around.

In the romantic North Country these poor dames abound. There is the Brown Lady of Rainham—stately in coif and rich brocade, but eyeless. There is 'Silky' of Denton Hall, near Newcastle, in a flowered, long-waisted satin gown and a satin hood. There is the White Lady of Skipsea Castle; Lady Derwentwater of Dilston Castle; the Gray Woman of Willington; Meg of Meldon in a broad hat; the White Lady Blenkinsop, who still wails over a chest of gold, the cause of all the unhappiness of her married life, *cum multis aliis*. The famous Cauld Lad of Hylton, on the river Wear, was only 'laid' during the last century, but his wail, 'I'm cauld! I'm cauld!' has been sworn to as heard at a much later date! He was not quite a stock ghost of the silent, gliding type, but was more of a brownie or pixie, working hard in the kitchen during the night if the maids were sluggards—very much contrary to the usual rule of his kind.

The Gray Man of Bellister is another well-known North Country ghost. His original was a wandering minstrel who called at the castle, which is near Haltwhistle on the South Tyne, was admitted, and pleased the Blenkinsop owner for a time, until he got suspicious that the poor old gray-clad singer was a spy from a neighbour baron with whom he was at feud. The minstrel got wind that he was suspected, and stole away. Blenkinsop sent bloodhounds after him, and he was torn to pieces. As this happened in 1470, and the Gray Man is still spoken of in a district by no means behind the age in refinement, intelligence, and education, who dare hope that argument can ever overthrow superstition? Corby Castle, near Carlisle, has been modernised, but in its wainscoted, tapestried 'Ghost Room' the Radiant Boy still walks. At Chillingham Castle in Northumberland there was also a Radiant Boy, until the skeleton of a boy found in one of the bed-room walls, not very long ago, was buried, and then he disappeared; and at Coatham in Yorkshire, popular tradition speaks of a shining child who vanishes when pursued.

Apropos of ghostly children, a pretty tradition is connected with a certain West Country house, to the effect that every cold morning is seen on the window the scribbling of little fingers, not to be effaced by any amount of rubbing.

The ghost of Knaresdale Hall, near Haltwhistle in Northumberland, was a steady belief not very, very long ago. In this case a brother murdered an inconvenient sister by drowning her in a pond, and the lady revenged herself by walking from the house to the pond upon every occasion that a member of the family happened to be about after dark. But if one were to enumerate what may be termed the 'Private Ghosts' of England and Wales, the walking ladies and gentlemen who, having been nobodies during their lives, are determined that something more than the mere epitaphs over their graves shall keep their memories green, the limits of this paper would be very far exceeded. The very house in which the author of the paper is writing is well known by the villagers to have a White Lady on its uppermost stair-landing, a discovery which very much unhinged some American visitors, who declared that if they had known it, nothing would have induced them to sleep so soundly in rooms abutting on the said landing during three months of the present year. But who she was, History sayeth not.

What Canon Jessopp says about his own county of Norfolk is true elsewhere: 'If the Norfolk peasant's mind be never so dull, the old traditions, handed down from ages past, come in to help him. He thinks it would be impious to doubt that disembodied spirits still hover about the scenes of their earthly pilgrimage.' So the Lincolnshire folk say that not only does Hereward the Wake still, on wild nights, ride furiously along the road from Bourne to Peterborough, but that he haunts the site of his old home close to the Well Head in the town of Bourne. So they believe that at Thorp Hall, near Louth, the ghost of the Spanish lady who fell in love with Sir John Bolles, as commemorated in the old ballad which commences:

Will you hear a Spanish lady,
How shee wooed an English man?
Garments gay and rich as may be,
Decked with jewels shee had on

(known from her dress as the Green Lady) still haunts a particular tree near the mansion.

Now and then—not often—ghostly appearances or sounds are explained to the peasant's satisfaction. Thus, in the county of Durham, 'Gabriel's Hounds' were for long, long years believed to shriek and howl through the air on dark nights, and to forebode death to him who heard and saw them. But prosaic modern research has proved them to be nothing but flocks of wild geese migrating southward on the approach of winter, and choosing dark nights for their journeys. Similarly, the Ghost of Irbydale in the Lincolnshire Wolds, a goblin who terrified travellers at night with its heart-rending cries, and who is said to be a witch who had been worried to death by dogs in a long past age, has been shown to be nothing but an owl. On the other hand, no true Cornishman will ever be induced to relinquish the belief that the spirit of King Arthur still haunts the ruins of Tintagel in the shape of a white chough; and assuredly the many English families who possess a white bird of omen, such as that which Mr John Oxenham saw in *Westward Ho!* cling firmly to the tradition, if not to the belief in it.

And so, ghosts or no ghosts, the position is just the same at the end of the nineteenth century as at the end of the eighteenth—all argument is against them, and if all belief is not for them, a very great deal more is than people like to acknowledge.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XXXII.—A HAIR OF THE DOG THAT BIT.

'WHAT?' cried Dr Kilpatrick: 'you don't mean it?'

'I do. It is a fact. The matter was being talked over at the club last night, and he has gone.'

'Do—you mean to tell me that Villar Endoza has gone?'

'Yes: back to his own place—recalled.'

'But why?—what for?'

'It seems to be considered that his people have thrown him over. Government found out, or some one betrayed the fact to them, that he had set people to work to buy those plans and drawings. They attacked the president about it: he professes utter ignorance of their coming to him save in a fair business way; they make a scapegoat of Endoza, profess to be very virtuous, and recall him at once.'

'But they have the plans worked up all the same,' said the doctor.

'Not they,' said Wynyan drily. 'I'm afraid that they have spent some thousands of pounds in vain, and Count Villar Endoza will be in hot water when he goes home.'

'But they did get the plans, didn't they?'

'Yes,' said Wynyan drily; 'but they did not get me.'

'You mean that they will prove to be useless without you?'

'I couldn't have said so a few months ago, but I can now: utterly useless without the inventor. Doctor, if ever there was an invention that needed no protection, it is mine.'

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'Well, I'm very glad he's gone,' said the doctor.—'But one moment: think he'll ever come back?'

'Never,' said Wynyan decisively.

'Then I'm off.'

'Patients?'

'No, sir, impatience. I'm off to South Audley Street.'

Wynyan started.

'I'm going to propose for that lady's hand, Paul, my lad, like a man, and if she won't have me'——

'Well, what then?'

'Humph! we shall see.'

Dr Kilpatrick kept his word. He went straight to South Audley Street, where, upon asking if the ladies were at home, the servant looked surprised, and showed him up at once to where Renée was seated alone, looking very pale.

She started up with extended hands.

'Oh, how quick you have been!' she cried.

'Quick, my dear? What do you mean?'

'You got my note? Marks was sent up with it half an hour ago.'

'Note? No: I've been out these two hours. Just come from Paul Wynyan's.'

Renée started perceptibly, and slightly changed colour.

'I sent up to beg you to come. I should have sent yesterday, only aunt begged me not to.'

'Your aunt! Eh! Not ill?'

'Very ill, I'm afraid,' said Renée, with the anxious look in her face growing more marked. 'She has been ailing for many days past, growing more strange and hysterical. I would not wait any longer without having advice.'

'Good girl,' said the doctor. 'But you ought to have sent sooner, my dear. If there is any garment in which the stitch in time saves nine, it is this earthly robe. Well, we will waste no more time. Tell me the symptoms before you take me up to her.'

'She is not in bed, only lying down on the couch in the little drawing-room; and it is so hard to explain. At first I thought it was only a little hysterical attack. She was continually breaking down and having fits of weeping; she will hardly touch food, hardly speak. She will only lie gazing straight before her as if thinking deeply, and I cannot rouse her in the least; she takes no heed of anything. Did you ever treat any one for such a complaint as this?'

'Yes, my dear, often.'

'You have?' cried Renée eagerly. 'What is the matter?'

'A thorough atonic state, brought on by a perversion of the mental organisation, my dear. There is no assimilation, and the absorbents having no work placed upon them, have ceased to act.'

'Oh!' said Renée.

'And I should advise you to be careful, my dear, or you may take the same complaint.'

'Is it so catching?' said Renée. Then quickly: 'I can't help it, doctor: I cannot stay away from her now.'

'Good girl!' said the doctor, rising. 'Quite right. It is a catching complaint, decidedly, but neither infectious nor contagious. It is more mental than bodily.'

'You don't think'—— began Renée, turning pale.

'Yes, I do, my dear; that's it. If the disease is not checked and cured, she'll go melancholy mad.'

'Pray come to her at once,' whispered Renée; 'don't let's lose a moment.'

The doctor nodded, and followed Renée into the darkened room, where, carefully dressed, Miss Bryne lay, with her eyes half closed, gazing at the window, looking worn and despondent in the extreme.

'Is that you, Renée?' she whispered faintly.

'Yes, dearest aunt,' said Renée softly, as she sank upon her knees by the couch and laid her soft cheek against the sufferer's brow. 'I've brought you some one to do you good. I could not let you go on like this.'

'Oh Renée!' cried her aunt reproachfully, 'how could you! I did trust you so, my child. You are verging now. Go and say I cannot see any one.'

'But you must, aunt dearest; it is for your good, and he is here.'

'He? Who is here? You have not been so foolish as to send for a doctor?'

'So wise, ma'am,' said Kilpatrick. 'She has done quite right. Now then, let us have a little quiet chat together,' he continued, taking a chair and placing it by the couch as Renée rose to make way; but Miss Bryne clung now to her niece's hand.

'Thank you, my child,' said the doctor, taking the hand into his. 'You don't understand feeling a pulse.'

He held the thin, hot, trembling hand in his for a few moments, and then let two fingers slide into the hollow just above the wrist, while Miss Bryne closed her eyes, and seemed to resign herself to her fate.

'Sit down, Renée, my dear,' said the doctor in a confidence-inspiring tone, 'and don't be alarmed. I think we can soon put this little matter right.'

Renée uttered a sigh of relief; and as she sank into a chair the tears began to fill her eyes, and trickled over down her cheeks.

'Hum! Ha!' ejaculated the doctor, after comparing the patient's pulse with the seconds of his big gold repeater, and then carefully laying the hand back, as if it were some breakable ornament that he had come to inspect. 'Now then, Miss Bryne, be good enough to tell me a few of your symptoms, and we will see what can be done.'

'Nothing, doctor, nothing,' she said feebly. 'I have no symptoms but this terrible weariness of life. I know I am slowly passing away.'

'No doubt about that, ma'am,' said the doctor; and he gave Renée a meaning look; 'but we must stop it.'

'No, no, doctor; nothing will stay it now. If you could give me something that would deaden this mental pain, and help me to die slowly and painlessly.'

'Hum! Well, yes, I could, ma'am; but wouldn't that be rather risky?'

'No, no: I wish it—I wish it.'

'But I meant for me, ma'am. I should not like to risk a hard-earned reputation by playing Cæsar Borgia to a good old friend.'

'I would relieve you of all responsibility. It would be to save me weeks, perhaps months, of agony,' said Miss Bryne feebly.

'Oh yes; but then, you see, after all, it would be—well, I don't like to say ugly things to a person in your state, but that would be hardly the thing, eh? for you. What do you say to Hamlet's views about the fardels, and there's the rub. Oh no: you are very bad, and look naturally at things from the worst point of view. We must not think of dying, when yours is a case which I can cure.'

'No, no: you think it is some poor bodily ailment, doctor. It is the brain.'

'Yes, aunt dear,' said Rénée excitedly; 'that is what Doctor Kilpatrick said.'

'True, my dear, but look at your aunt: you can almost see for yourself. Dyspepsia is rampant.'

Miss Bryne uttered a piteous little laugh, but the doctor went on.

'Quite true, ma'am: our organs are like the card-houses a child builds in a row. You touch one, and it upsets all the others. Your heart was wrong first. If the heart is affected, the brain suffers; then the digestive organs—liver, spleen, and the rest of them. Final result: terrible despondency, weariness of life, longing for the end.'

'Yes, yes, yes,' sighed Miss Bryne. 'It is hopeless.—Ah, Rénée, my child, I begged you not to send for medical advice. Why did you?—why did you?' and the tears stole from between the closed lids.

'Because she was a good, sensible little woman, and wanted to see her aunt as she always used to be.—Didn't you, my dear?'

'Of course—of course,' said Rénée, with a sob.

'Ah!' cried the doctor sharply; 'none of that, my dear. That's not the way to behave in a sick-room.—Now, Miss Bryne,' he continued breezily, 'you've known me a great many years.'

'Yes, doctor, yes,' sighed the patient.

'Never liked me much, but you'll acknowledge, I suppose, that I am fairly able as a physician.'

'Aunt has often said that in a case of emergency she would trust you sooner than any one in London; haven't you, aunt?'

'Yes,' said Miss Bryne faintly.

'Thank you, ma'am,' said the doctor gravely: 'that's very nice of you; and I'm glad that I won so much of your respect. Very well then, you may believe me when I repeat that I thoroughly understand your case, and tell you that if you will help me, by following out my advice, I can make you a healthy, happy woman once again.'

'Impossible, doctor!'

'Nothing is getting to be impossible, ma'am. A hundred years ago the profession let folk die over things that we laugh at as trifles nowadays. Say the word, ma'am, and I'll set you right; for if you don't, really I believe you will die or go melancholy mad.'

'Oh doctor, why should you wait for her to speak!' cried Rénée, almost indignantly. 'She does not know what is good for her.'

'Quite right, my dear; quite right,' said the doctor, sitting back and frowning; 'but I tell you frankly, that if she does not work with me, heart and soul, I can do nothing.'

'Oh, but aunt will be good, and do exactly what you wish, for my sake—won't you, aunt dear?' cried Rénée, going round to the other side of the couch, to kneel down and pass her arm beneath the sufferer's neck.

'I cannot—I cannot,' murmured the sufferer.

'But you must, aunt; you shall,' cried Rénée passionately. 'I am so lonely now; what should I do without you?'

She went into a fit of sobbing, and Miss Bryne's thin arms clasped her neck; and straightway the aunt began to weep piteously in unison with her niece till the doctor spoke again.

'Thank you, my dear,' he said; 'that has done her good. I like to see those emotions stirred. That's right: good, honest, womanly tears, such as come from the heart. Shows that there is not so much wrong there as I thought.'

'Then pray, pray go on,' cried Rénée, holding her aunt's head to her breast, and softly rocking herself to and fro, as the weak woman still clung to her. 'Do something. What would you prescribe?'

The doctor looked at her curiously,

'Well, not a little gray powder in jam, such as I used to mix with a paper-knife, and then put upon your pretty little red tongue, my dear,' he said with a little chuckle.

Rénée looked at him almost indignantly, he seemed to her so heartless; but he only nodded, took out a gold snuff-box, helped himself to a pinch, exclaimed 'Hah!' loudly, and then, with a great deal of decision, bent toward the couch, and said: 'Now, madam, will you trust your adviser? Am I to set you right?'

'Yes,' cried Rénée decisively.

'No, no, my child,' sobbed Miss Bryne; 'it is too late.'

'Not a bit,' said the doctor, frowning and looking fixedly at the patient. 'Once more I tell you, I know from your symptoms and from my genuine knowledge of you as a woman—I beg pardon—a very estimable lady, that I can cure you. May I begin?'

'Yes,' cried Rénée, again with a puzzled look beginning to appear in her eyes.

'Well then,' sighed Miss Bryne piteously, 'yes.'

'Hah!' ejaculated the doctor; 'getting better already.'

'For your sake, dearest Rénée, I'll try to live.'

'Oh, it will not take much trying,' said the doctor, turning his keen gaze now from the half-averted face with its tightly closed eyes, to meet those of Rénée, now fixed searchingly on his in a half-wondering, still more puzzled way. 'To begin with—*ab initio*, as we medical fellows say—I shall have to give you a very nasty dose.'

'I could not take it,' said Miss Bryne faintly.

'Aunt dear, you must,' whispered Rénée,

averting her eyes for a moment as she lowered the patient gently back upon the pillow to turn again her inquiring look upon the doctor.

'There, ma'am, you hear,' he said quietly; and he took the patient's hand in his. 'A very nasty dose, but the sweets shall come afterward. You will take it, then?'

'Yes, doctor,' she said faintly, 'I will try. What is it I must take?'

He did not answer for a few moments, but answered Rénée's questioning eyes in silence before replying aloud:

'Me, madam—at last.'

Rénée uttered a wild hysterical laugh, and ran from the room.

'Rénée!'

But she was gone, and the doctor held Miss Bryne's hand tightly, and went on one knee by the couch, to whisper earnestly: 'It was a bitter dream, my dear: he never cared—he never knew you for the woman you are. You are awake now, and you know the one ambition of my life. Let the past be dead. I have your promise now. Only an old man's love, but you know how true.'

Half an hour had passed when Rénée stole back, to find her aunt sleeping gently, with the doctor seated by the couch, softly waving a fan about her peaceful countenance.

He rose slowly with his finger to his lips, and they stole together into the other room.

'Weak as an infant, my dear; but she'll soon come to herself. Let her sleep, and then you must feed her up.'

'But doctor?' whispered Rénée.

'Don't laugh at me, my dear, and call me an old fool. I'm a tolerable physician, but as weak as the rest of the world about the heart.'

Rénée pressed his hand warmly.

'Thank you, my dear. She couldn't help it, poor thing; but, knowing what I did, I've often felt as if I should like to crack that scoundrel's head as I would a nut. A heartless brute, that he was.'

'I am so glad, doctor; but you think she will get well?'

'Get well? Of course. But, I say, Rénée'——

'Hush, doctor, please—for pity's sake! Tell me, when will you come again?'

'Come again?' he cried, with his eyes twinkling. 'Three times a day, till I dare prescribe a change.'

IVORY.

Ivory is, as every one knows, the product of the elongated incisors of certain animals such as the elephant, narwhal, walrus, sea-horse, &c. These remarkable teeth, or tusks as they are usually called, differ from ordinary teeth in a most important particular namely, they continue to grow as long as the animal exists, and thus in many instances attain an enormous size. Physiologists tell us that the reason of the extraordinary development of these special teeth is that they spring from what are called permanent pulps—that is, the roots of these teeth do not, as in man and most other animals, become sooner or later absorbed, but continue in a soft living condition which permits of a continuous increase taking place.

The name ivory was at one time given to the main substance of the teeth of all animals, but it has become restricted to the modification of dentine or tooth substance, which in transverse sections or fractures show lines of different colours or striæ proceeding in the arc of a circle, and forming by their decussation minute curvilinear, or lozenge-shaped spaces. This engine-turned, decussatory appearance is essentially a characteristic of true ivory, and forms a test by which it can be distinguished from any imitations or closely allied substances.

Leaving out of consideration the extinct mammoth elephants whose teeth are found in Siberia, the largest tusks are found to be those of the African species, those from India being about half the size only. It is curious that whilst in Africa both the males and females are found with large tusks, in India those of the female project only a few inches from the gum, and in Ceylon tusks are at times absent in both sexes. There are, however, some exceptions to this rule, and one to two hundred years ago, Ceylon ivory was in this country esteemed the best in quality; it is still distinguished by its fine grain, small size, and pearl-bluish tint. Apparently it is the male elephant that is usually found tuskless in Ceylon, and the reason seems to be a scientific mystery. Sanderson writing upon the subject, says: 'It is difficult to imagine what can cause the vital difference of tusks and no tusks between the male elephant of continental India and Ceylon. The climate may be said to be the same, as also their food, and I have not seen any theory advanced that seems at all well founded to account for their absence in the Ceylon elephants.'

African ivory is now conceded to be the finest. The first quality of this comes from near the equator, and it has been remarked with regard to this fact, that the nearer the equator, the smaller is the elephant, but the larger the tusks. The ivory from equatorial Africa is closer in the grain, and has less tendency to become yellow by exposure than Indian ivory. The finest transparent African ivory is collected along the west coast between latitudes 10° N. and 10° S., and this is believed to deteriorate in quality and to be more liable to damage with increase of latitude in either direction. The whitest ivory comes from the east coast. It is considered to be in best condition when recently cut; it has then a mellow, warm, transparent tint, as if soaked in oil, and very little appearance of grain or texture. Indian ivory has an opaque, dead, white colour, and a tendency to become discoloured. The characteristics of that from Ceylon we have already mentioned. Of the Asian varieties, however, Siam is considered to be the finest, being much superior in appearance and density. The ivory of the mammoth tusks is not very much esteemed, particularly in England; it is considered too dry and brittle for elaborate work, besides which it is very liable to turn yellow. As a matter of fact, the largest tusks very rarely leave Asiatic Russia, being either too rotten for industrial purposes, or so heavy that the natives are obliged to saw them up before removal.

The bulk of the ivory that we receive comes from Africa. In India the animal is never hunted for the sake of the tusks, and the quantity exported is therefore not so great as it otherwise would be. In 1893 we received 1234 cwt., valued at £62,391, from India; whilst from Africa we had 3008 cwt., valued at £142,078.

The public sales of ivory take place in London once a quarter, and the produce is on show at the London Docks. The sight is well worth seeing, and visitors to the metropolis during the week preceding the fourth Tuesdays in January, April, July, and October, would be well repaid by spending a few hours amidst the magnificent collection.

The value naturally depends upon the variety, condition, and the question of supply and demand. It varies from ten to ninety pounds per hundredweight, the highest price being generally paid for what are known on the market as cut points for billiard balls, and for the largest tusks.

In the trade, fine ivory is known by having no cracks or flaws; tusks that taper very gradually are preferred, sharply tapering and much bent ones entailing great waste in cutting up. The coat should be fine, thin, clear, and transparent.

When we take into consideration the large quantity of ivory imported annually, it is not surprising that those interested in it should at times become somewhat anxious about future supplies. An authority upon Indian matters some few years back was particularly struck by this thought, and wrote: 'It is reported that England alone imports 1,200,000 pounds of ivory, to obtain which thirty thousand elephants have to be annually killed, and the world's supply must, it has been estimated, necessitate one hundred thousand being annually slaughtered. It may safely be assumed that, if this rule of destruction continues, a comparatively few years will suffice to exterminate the African species of elephant.'

The assumption is, fortunately for the world at large, quite incorrect. As a matter of fact, our imports average about the same year by year, but there is a very important factor which the Indian authority just quoted has evidently overlooked—namely, that most of the ivory that we receive is technically known as dead ivory, that is, tusks which have been taken from elephants long since dead, and stored up in the interior of Africa. Of live ivory or tusks taken from recently killed animals we do not receive, comparatively speaking, a considerable quantity. There is no fear whatever of the supply being exhausted during the next two or three generations. The following report, which was published a few years ago by the United States Commercial Agent at Boma, will be particularly interesting reading in this connection: 'The ivory shows a most remarkable increase, and is the most valuable article exported from the Congo district. It all comes from the high Congo, both north and south of the river. Steamers bring it as far as Stanley Pool, and from there to Matadi (two hundred and fifty miles) native carriers bring it on their backs. I have seen in one day five hundred carriers come into Matadi, each man carrying a tusk averaging sixty-five pounds in weight. When tusks weigh two hundred pounds, which not infrequently happens, four men carry them. Most of the ivory now coming down is what is known as "dead" ivory. Some of the elephants from which these tusks came were killed one hundred years ago, and the kings of villages have been storing it, placing the last tusks brought in on top of the pile, and when they required some goods from the coast traders, the tusks from the bottom layers were taken. This system has prevailed for years, and it is estimated that there is enough ivory stored in the interior to supply the world for the next century. It is estimated, but upon whose authority I cannot discover, that there are still at least two hundred thousand elephants in Central Africa. The only live or new ivory which now comes down is that procured by hunters attached to the different trading houses. I may add that live ivory commands a higher price than the dead. A state expedition visited a king some months ago in the interior. Upon leaving, the commanding officer presented the king with a uniform coat, cocked hat, and a sword. The king in return presented the officer with one hundred and fifty tusks of ivory, averaging two hundred and twenty pounds each, and provided carriers to take them to the river. These people do not recognise the value, and laugh at the trader for buying. Some of these kings have stockades of ivory built round their dwellings.'

Partly on account of the question of its final exhaustion, and partly on account of the high price it always secures, inventors and others have from time to time sought to introduce substitutes, but nothing really satisfactory has yet been produced. The material known under various names, but generally called celluloid, has not served more than a limited purpose, and other introductions have failed signally; none of them will take the peculiar polish of ivory, and cannot therefore enter into serious competition with it.

Vegetable ivory, derived from the nut of the *Phytelephas macrocarpa*, can hardly be ranked as a competitor, although it is sometimes regarded as such in some quarters. It can obviously only be used for small work such as fancy articles and buttons, whilst the bulk of true ivory is used by cutlers and billiard-ball makers.

Phytelephas is a word manufactured to describe the substance, being compounded of two Greek words, meaning plant and elephant; for as the elephant is the ivory-bearing animal, so the Tagua, as it is sometimes called, is the ivory-bearing plant. It grows in the low hot valleys of the Peruvian Andes, and is utilised in many ways by the natives. The fruit at first contains an insipid and limpid juice with which travellers quench their thirst; the liquid gradually becomes milky and sweet, and increases in consistence until it becomes as solid as ivory. The taste varies: if the fruit be cut while soft and filled with fluid, the latter becomes sour if kept long. The natives, it is said, form handles for knives (which, by the way, considering the size of the nuts, must be fairly small ones), spindles, and other ornaments of the nuts, which are whiter than real ivory. They retain their colour and hardness provided they are not kept too long under water; even after immersion for a long time, they again become white and hard when dried. The largest leaves of the plants are used by the Indians for thatching their cottages. The nuts themselves are about the size and have the appearance of an average potato, flattened on one side. The fruit is composed of several of the nuts, and so much resembles the head of a nigger that the Spaniards out there have given it the name of *Cabeza de Negro* (Negro's head).

In commerce, the nuts are known as Corosso or Corozo nuts; they were first imported into Europe in the early twenties, but their use did not become general until about 1840. They were first sold by the thousand, and in 1854 or thereabouts realised about eight shillings for that quantity; they are now sold by weight, and the present market price is about ten pounds per ton.

It is said that, at first, articles manufactured from them were sold as made of real ivory; but we fail to see how this could have been done, as vegetable ivory has not the engine-turned pattern that we have already mentioned is always present in true ivory. Possibly it was the public who were imposed upon; they, of course, are not supposed to be conversant with the technical characteristics of everything they purchase, and it must undoubtedly have been for their benefit that a Belgian chemist invented a ready means of distinguishing between animal and vegetable ivory. His plan was to place the two substances into contact with concentrated sulphuric acid; the animal ivory remained unaffected, but the vegetable at the end of several minutes developed a rose tint that was easily removed by simply washing with water.

Corosso nuts are very largely used in button-making; they are easily dyed with aniline colours, and after being polished with soap, are as smooth and bright as porcelain.

PROOF POSITIVE.

CHAPTER II.

I LINGERED long alone before I began to undress. The fire, however it may have misbehaved at first, burned brightly and cheerily now, and made a pleasant companion to my thoughts. There was no reason why marriage should be long delayed, and I planned a matrimonial trip to the Riviera, which Kathryn had never seen. I knew it well from hasty annual visits of a fortnight at a time, and Kathryn and I, in my own fancy, wandered to many a lovely spot on the old Corniche Road, 'by seas the peacock's neck in hue.' And whilst I sat thus happily musing, I could hear her moving directly overhead. I prayed with all my heart for her happiness, and I made resolves, as I suppose all lovers do, that nothing should ever cloud her life, or bring her a care, if I could help it.

I daresay I had sat thus for a full hour, when my waning candle warned me to undress at once, and then I noticed for the first time that, let into the wall beside the fireplace, was a second safe, which looked the precise replica of the one I had seen up-stairs. I looked at it with no particular interest, but when I pulled the door open, I noticed that it was provided with a latch, and that if it were once closed, it could not be opened without the key. That was a sounder receptacle, I thought, than the other safe in Kathryn's room. At least, a thief would have to force this, or to find the key, whereas he had but to give a tug at the door of the other and it opened to him at once. I remember drowsily thinking that I would remind the Professor of this safe in the morning, and drowsily resolving to do nothing of the kind, but to advise him again to send his money to the bank for safety, and then I fell asleep.

I awoke from a horrible nightmare, and the fire was still burning redly in the grate. I had dreamed that from the storm outside, the roaring of which I could hear distinctly in my sleep, a face had been thrust in at Kathryn's window—a face so vile and brutalised that I had never fancied the like of it. I do not know from what point of view I saw my dream, but Kathryn was sleeping tranquilly, though the wind tossed her hair, and the snow fell on her cheek. The eyes at the open window gazed around stealthy and menacing, and the owner of the eyes dragged himself softly into the room and closed the window. He wore list slippers, and his footsteps made no sound. He moved towards the safe, opened it softly, and drew out the cash-box. Then he went stealthily back again towards his place of entrance, and on a sudden the box fell with a clatter to the floor, Kathryn started with a cry, and the villain stood over her with a gleaming knife in his hand. The cry which awoke me was my own, and the noise of the falling cash-box was translated into the sound of a falling coal from the fire. But though the dream was broken, I lay sweating and trembling for many minutes under the terror of it, and it was long before I could calm myself to sleep again.

I lay late next morning, though I am and had been by custom an early riser. I had no guess as to the reason, but there was a heavy weight upon me; a sense of impending mischief quelled my spirit. The house was as quiet as a grave, and something made me listen with strained attention for a sound which did not come. I could have believed myself alone in it, but when I had dressed and descended, the maid came into the room to lay breakfast.

'I am very late,' I said. 'I am afraid that Miss Gordon and Dr Zeck have breakfasted without me.'

There was something curiously disconcerting and chilly in the glance the girl sent in my direction. It seemed made up of wonder and repulsion.

'The Professor has gone out,' she said. 'Miss Gordon is ill.'

'Ill?' I asked. 'What is the matter?'

'That's what I was to tell you,' the girl replied, and with this she left the room. Her manner was as unexpected as the intelligence she gave me. Kathryn had looked the very picture of rosy health last night, and only last night I had been met by the whole household with the cordiality to which I had been accustomed for years. The Professor had left, apparently without a message, and it was no fancy which led me to think that the whole atmosphere of the place was changed.

Before the housemaid returned, I had written a hasty note on one of the blank leaves of my professional memorandum book. I found an envelope, and enclosed my message within it.

'Let Miss Gordon have this at once,' I said, as the girl re-entered with the tray.

'She's not to be disturbed,' she answered, with an openly expressed aversion in her face and voice.

'Did the Professor say at what time he would return?' I asked her.

'He left no message with me,' the girl responded insolently.

'Let your mistress have that note as soon as she awakes,' I said, 'and tell her that I will return at five o'clock this afternoon.'

I held the envelope towards her, but she recoiled from me, with a pale face and eyes full of disdain.

'What on earth is the matter with you?' I asked her angrily.

'Oh, nothing that need trouble *you*,' she retorted, with a scornful emphasis on the last word, and flounced out of the room with a backward glance of anger and contempt which left me altogether stricken and bewildered. I drank a cup of coffee in a mechanical way, and after lingering indeterminate and miserable for half an hour, I left the house, not in the least understanding what had befallen me.

My patients were already awaiting me when I reached home. The bitter cold and the heavy snow made them fewer than common, so that they were soon despatched, and I was able to start upon my rounds at the usual hour. Throughout the day I was never free of wonder and indignation, and no sooner were my duties over than I gave orders to my coachman to drive me to the Professor's house. It was the cook who answered my summons at the door—an elderly woman, who had been in the Professor's employ when I had first known him. She had evidently been crying bitterly, and in answer to my inquiry for her master, she gave me a flat 'Not at home,' and closed the door in my face.

I often think that words are made for commonplace uses, and that they fail us when we most seem to need them. To say that I was amazed, angry, and wounded all at once, seems to say nothing. I went away doubting my own sanity, wondering if the events of the past twenty hours were all a dream. On reaching home I wrote a letter to Kathryn and despatched it by messenger. It was returned unopened, and this completed the sum of my misery and my mystification.

My feet took me to the house again that evening, and I walked dismally up and down before it, not able to decide on anything. There were lights in the Professor's room and in Kathryn's, and every now and then every room in the house was by turns illuminated, as if some unusual bustle were going on within. A dozen times at least my hand was at the bell, but I found my courage fail me, and I went back into the street without having again solicited an entry. Before midnight the whole of the tenement was in darkness, and I walked homewards, denouncing myself bitterly for my cowardice and irresolution. On my return I wrote an impassioned letter to Dr Zeck, and then feigning to have hurt my hand, I made my man-servant direct a plain and unmarked envelope. No answer came next day, and, as it happened, I was detained by professional business to a late hour. By this time I was so far my own master that I had resolved, if necessary, to force an interview, and to learn by what strange circumstances a beloved pupil, an honoured friend, and an accepted lover had been suddenly turned to a person whom it was permissible to treat with so much contumely. As I sprang from my cab and ran rapidly up the steps, it did not at first strike me that all the house was dark. I rang, and at the first peal of the bell, a sense of desolation, such as I had not felt until then, struck me through and through, for I knew instinctively from the sound that the place was empty and deserted. In spite of this surety I rang again and again, and with increasing violence, stepping into the street between whiles, and staring up at the blank, unwinking windows. Some belated tradesman's-boy came by with a basket on his arm, and stood to watch me, whistling, and jigging to his own music on the frozen pavement. Some sense of shame in my own futile employment forced me to address him.

'Do you belong to this neighbourhood? Do you know what has happened here?'

'I seed 'em movin' this morning,' said the boy. 'They went away in two big Pickford's vans.'

At that I surrendered all further effort, and drove home broken-hearted. Gusts of passionate anger came over me at moments, and sometimes, in a very exasperation of bewilderment, I found myself pacing about the room clutching my hair with both hands. But for the most part I sat quiet, like a man made of frozen lead, conscious only of an unspeakable bitterness of misery.

Day after day went by, and week after week, but the speeding time brought no solution of the mystery. I advertised in all the newspapers, beseeching for an explanation, but none came. My patients began to fall away. Acquaintances passed me in the streets with averted looks. I felt as if a curse had fallen upon me.

At last I found an opportunity for a question. An old comrade of mine, more than an acquaintance, Emile Dupré, with whom I had studied at the Hotel Dieu for three years, cut me point blank in Regent Street. His eye had met mine, and I knew of course that he recognised me. I had already put out my hand towards him when he screwed on a frozen stare and went by me. For a second or two I was as helpless as if I had received a mortal stab;

but I recovered swiftly and made after him, and took him by the shoulder.

'Dupré, a word with you. You recognised me when you passed just now?'

'I recognised you,' he answered.

'Will you tell me why you passed me by?'

'I passed you by,' he said, with a freezing self-possession, 'because I learn on excellent authority that you are not a person with whom a gentleman can associate.'

'Will you favour me,' I asked, as quietly as I could, 'with your excellent authority?'

'No,' he responded, and made a movement to continue his walk.

'Pardon me, Dupré,' I said, passing my arm through his. 'I shall insist upon my right, and I shall give you yours. It is your right, in the first place, to have my solemn assurance that I have no knowledge of any circumstance in my life which could justify your treatment of me, and it is my right to demand an explanation.'

He turned and looked me in the face, with hard scrutiny.

'For Heaven's sake, Dupré,' I broke out, 'act like a man of honour and a friend. I swear to you, by all I hold most sacred, that I have never been guilty of an act which denies me the right to hold up my head amongst men of honour, and yet my oldest and dearest friend runs away and hides from me; the lady to whom I was to have been married returns my letters unopened; acquaintances cross the street as I draw near, as if I had the plague. You are the first man I have a right to question, and I will have an answer. What is this blight which has fallen on my life?'

'Come,' said Dupré. The people were gathering about us with curious eyes. 'This is no place for such a talk as this.'

Fortunately, Dupré was but a poor speaker of English, and I had naturally addressed him in his native tongue. It is probable that not more than two or three of those who had heard had understood.

He waved his disengaged hand, and a hansom cab drew up at the curb. I gave the driver my address, and in a very few minutes we were at home. I fee'd the man at random, and entering by the aid of my latchkey, led the way to my consulting-room. Dupré laid his hat and stick upon the table, and drew off his gloves with an air of grave deliberation.

'Tell me,' I said, 'what is this hidden scandal which has broken my heart, and is driving me to ruin?'

'Innocent or guilty,' he returned, 'it is not agreeable for me to speak, or you to listen. But as you say, you have your rights, and I have mine.'

'Go on,' I said. 'Let me know what I have to fight against.'

'To begin with,' said Dupré, looking me in the face with an eye which seemed full of a fatal purpose. 'You know'—— He hesitated, and, looking downward, strained strongly at the glove he held in both hands. 'You know that Professor Zeck is dead?'

His eye shot upward to meet mine, as if he had laid a trap for me.

'Dead!' I cried. 'Dead!'

'Dead,' he answered, like an echo. 'He died of a broken heart, literally and simply of a broken heart, in Paris. We buried him the day before yesterday. He told me that you had killed him as surely as if you had shot or stabbed or poisoned him. Need I go on?'

For anything I can tell, my agony and amazement may have looked like guilt. I shook and stammered.

'I had killed him? I loved him as I loved no other man alive.'

'It is not my business,' said Dupré, 'to measure your capacity for the common human affections.'

'In God's name, what had I done?' I cried.

'I can hardly bring myself to tell the story,' Dupré answered, 'for, to say the truth, I am quite open to a feeling of vicarious shame; but if you want it, you shall have it.'

I stammered that I knew nothing, and besought him to go on. I could see that he disbelieved me; and I knew even then, in the midst of all my desolation and my agony of mind, that he looked at me as at an actor who was trying to make the expression of one emotion pass for that of another.

'Three months have gone by since Professor Zeck hurriedly withdrew himself from his adopted land,' Dupré began. 'As I understood him, you had only a day before, or a day or so before, offered yourself as a suitor for the hand of his grand-daughter, Miss Gordon.'

'Yes, yes,' I answered.

'He accepted your proposal, and a little later, the lady confirmed his acceptance.'

'Yes, yes!'

'A little later, he showed you his grand-daughter's dowry, a sum of a hundred thousand francs or so, which he kept in an unlocked cash-box in an open safe, in the lady's bedroom. I am right so far?'

'Absolutely.'

'A snow-storm of unusual severity induced him to offer you the hospitality of his house. You stayed the night there. Sometime in the night, the safe was opened, the box was abstracted, and—— Do you wish me to go on?'

'Go on.' I hardly knew of what I thought.

'The thief was recognised.'

'Well?' And still the blow had not fallen, and still I hardly knew of what I thought.

'Recognised by the miserable girl who had plighted her faith to him for life that very night.'

'A lie!' I cried. 'A wretched, base, malignant lie.'

'That is your answer,' said Dupré, with a face as hard as iron. 'Your *fiancée* is a wicked, base, malignant liar? And your old friend, who, awakened by a cry of horror, came from his room in time to see you stealing down the stair—is he also a base, wicked, malignant liar?'

'It is Kathryn,' I exclaimed, 'who makes this hideous charge against me? Impossible!'

'She and her grandfather both knew you. Both saw you plainly. You have my answer to your questions now, and I see no use in staying longer.'

'One minute, Dupré,' I begged him. 'You know where she is?'

'I know,' he answered, 'but I shall not tell you. I surprised your story at a time when Professor Zeck was so broken with mental anguish that he betrayed himself. He made me promise solemnly that I would never breathe a word of it to a soul. I made that promise, and I do not reckon that I have broken it in answering your questions.'

He would have gone then, but that I stood between him and the door. I have no power to recall the words I used, but I protested my innocence. I begged him to consider the chance of error, to remember the mad impossibility of the charge. How could a man of honour be suddenly transformed into a thief so base? What motive was there in robbing Kathryn, of all people in the world? I had been prosperous, unencumbered, without a care. Why should I have stolen what I was told would one day be by own? The very violence of my suffering—the passion of my revolt against this intolerable, mad suspicion—may have had a sinister influence. He listened, since without force he could not escape from listening, but it was with a look divided between weariness and loathing. At last I flung the door open and released him. I heard his footsteps as he retired. I heard the hall-door close behind him, and then something seemed to snap within my head, and I fell.

I learned afterwards that I was found and carried up-stairs, that medical aid was called in, and that I was ill for months with brain fever. When youth and constitution asserted themselves, I was sent to the sea-side. A whole half-year elapsed before I was able to go back to my work. Then everything that had been done in the past five years was to do over again. My practice had gone to pieces. Nobody wanted me. I seemed to have no place in the world.

The expenses of a medical man in London practice are heavy, and my savings had been small. Such as they were, my long illness had bitten terribly into them, and now they dwindled more and more. The lease of the house realised something, and the furniture was sold at auction. I bought a small practice in the country, and my story followed me. The cook and the housemaid had talked, as was only natural. I dragged along in bitter hatred of the world, and in bitter exasperation at it, and at last I settled down as an apothecary's assistant. I lived that life seven years, and then came the end of care.

SOCIAL LIFE IN ARGENTINA.

When preparing to come out to this far-away land, I made many attempts to find out something of the every-day life I should lead; what society I should find; what amusements were to be got out of one's surroundings; and what opportunities of making home-life pleasant and interesting. I could get little information, for few people knew anything of Argentina, except as a country which had swallowed up much English gold, and where revolutions were as common as strikes are at home. No books seemed to have been written about life out there, and in the magazines I could find no stories or incidents, stirring or picturesque, from life in Argentina. I had to fall back on a traveller's tales of grotesque animals wandering over a hideous land. Indeed I came to the conclusion that I was going to a country where social life was too uninteresting to be worth describing. After a year or two I have found that time has not passed so monotonously, but on the whole pleasantly, so I venture to describe something of the style in which we spend our days, for the benefit of those at home.

Of course in a country which is equal to the united area of Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland, and Greece, and whose population is made up of natives from all these countries and a few more, one finds every sort of life and many strange customs. The city of Buenos Ayres, the first in South America, is a great capital full of stirring life. It is not beautiful in itself or its surroundings; the shops are good, and you can buy anything you want, if you care to pay a heavy price. English people on the whole seem to find the life pleasant and sociable; they can enjoy good theatres, operas, and balls, as well as any amount of outdoor amusements in a delightful climate. The smaller towns are more or less provincial and unattractive, with the exception of Cordoba, one of the few old cities in the southern hemisphere. For three centuries it was the centre of learning, under the despotic rule of the Jesuits. It has many fine churches and a cathedral worth seeing, fortified and showing traces of Moorish art. There old families lived in great houses with innumerable retainers, all the luxuries of Europe being brought (at enormous cost) in bullock carts over the leagues of grassy plains that lie between Cordoba and the ports of Rosario and Buenos Ayres. There were to be found the finest types of Argentina refinement and learning. The city itself is beautiful, a green oasis with a background of noble hills.

But I must turn to the camp and the life of the English there. Camp is the Argentina name for the country as distinguished from the town (the Spanish *cámpo*), and is the word always used by the English residents. We talk of a man buying a bit of camp, of going out to the camp; and there is no mistaking a camp man in boots and breeches, with a wide-brimmed hat, a revolver in his belt, and a riding whip in his hand.

There are two styles of camp—inside and outside. *Inside* consists of the district round Buenos Ayres, where the land is well populated, many railways, all centring in Buenos Ayres, making it easy to come and go, sell the products of the estancia, and bring out in return the luxuries of town. Here you find old-established estancias with houses as well furnished and as comfortable as you can find in a country where in general comfort is little understood. Well-grown *montés* (as woods are called), and gardens rich in flowers, surround the houses.

Outside is a very different world. Where trenches and earthworks of the simplest form, to keep out the Indians, once stretched league upon league, with forts at short distances, from which barbarous soldiers defended the frontier, by degrees killing out the miserable Indians, there are now long lines of railway, with small wayside stations, and here and there an attempt at a town, and estancias, from small enclosures of two or three leagues, to huge estates owned by companies (one of these covers a thousand square miles). Here, outside, all is new; the oldest house has perhaps a record of twelve years, and we look with respect on its watch-tower and loopholed walls, for Indians were still lurking round when it was built. Their former presence is still to be traced in the dark skin, straight hair, and narrow eyes often noticed in a gaucho, and also in many words used by the natives when working in the corrals amongst horses and cattle.

It is in this district that so many of the young Englishmen who arrive by every mail from England, full of high hopes and courage, are chiefly to be found. They are, of course, eager to make money, and for the most part capable of doing so, aided by the few (as yet very few) wives and sisters who have the courage to rough it. The first years of a new estancia have to be years of hard toil and rough living, but when wells have been sunk and fences put up, then one can turn to building a comfortable house and laying out a garden; and though the work is still hard and constant, yet there is time for recreation and amusement. On the whole, life is very cheerful in a land where the sun always shines, and the air is peculiarly clear and bracing. Of course there are days when a furious north wind sweeps unchecked over the great level land, bringing clouds of scorching dust, its hot breath seeming to burn up all tender vegetation, being almost as fatal to a garden as a sharp spring-frost. Then again, there are cold winter days when it is impossible to get warm, and one realises only too well what a precious thing firewood is in this fuel-less country. Nothing could be more perfect than the spring and autumn weather, and it is then, when the days are long and the sun not too hot, that one can enjoy a *paséo*. It is difficult to find an equivalent in English for this word, as it means anything from loitering round the garden, or paying a call, to a trip to Europe. To us a 'paséo' generally means a few days' holiday, getting away from the estancia and its every-day cares and worries, leaving them all to some kindly friend, who is left in the solitary house with a bewildering number of parting injunctions about things on no account to be forgotten.

How pleasant it is to start in the cool sweet-scented dawn, when the early sunbeams are glinting over the purple alfalfa fields, the horses eager to be off in the keen air! Then come long hours on the road, until at sundown twinkling lights tell that we are near our friend's house, eager voices welcome us, and kindly hands help to unsaddle or unharness the horses. After their simple wants (very simple in this country) are seen to, comes a cheery evening meal in the plain but snug sitting-room. Next day is spent 'looking round,' inspecting the horses to see what new ones have been bought or broken in. There is always something new about an estancia, and this is the most interesting thing in camp-life, that new schemes have to be made and carried out continually. Then messages are sent out to summon the neighbours, who shortly turn up from all sides to play in or watch a game of polo. There is a great slaughter of ducks and turkeys, and where the company includes ladies, cakes and pies are baked, and a dainty dinner served. Extra beds are easily arranged, for every house has a large supply of *catris*, and in cold weather every one travels with *ponchos*. A *catri* is the simplest form of bedstead, made like a camp-stool, easily folded up and put aside, and without a mattress most cool and restful on hot nights. The evening is spent, if hot, in the veranda, or indoors round the fireside, playing games, and dancing or singing where there is a piano. The custom of visiting all the estancias in the neighbourhood in this way, passing a day or two at each, answers to a round of calls, in camp the distance between neighbours being usually too great to allow of paying a visit and returning in the same day. I have heard many amusing descriptions of going a *paséo* in the old times, when things were done on a larger scale than nowadays. In one house all the neighbours gathered for Christmas, two tents being put up in the *patio*, one for ladies, the other for men. The young fellows on their arrival would secure a *catri* and hide it in the *monté* so as to make sure of a bed, the less fortunate having to sleep on their *recáu* (as the native saddle is called), which being made up of about half-a-dozen saddle-cloths and skins, is not a bad substitute, and is indeed the true gaucho's only bed.

Polo is fast becoming the game of the Englishmen of South America. Wherever there are a dozen to be found within reach (that may mean a ride of a dozen miles or more), a club is formed. No game could be more suitable to a country where all men ride and possess horses. Sunday is the great day for polo. I know this will be much disapproved of by many of my readers, who do not realise what possibilities there are for *mis-spending* Sunday in camp. There are no churches of any sort, no clergymen or missionaries. Even books are limited in number, and few people possess a piano; so, when no work is going on, there is nothing to do. Sunday is always a holiday; the *peones* pass it visiting friends, sucking maté, and talking by the hour; or at the *pulperias* (camp-stores), where often on Sundays races take place, and raffles are got up, and the poor peon is cheated out of his money and encouraged to get drunk on *caña*, the native drink, made from sugar-cane. With nothing to do on the estancia, it is natural enough for a young fellow to ride over to the *pulperia*, just to see what is going on; once there, it is not easy for him to avoid the *caña* and the betting, and even the fighting that often follows up.

On the other hand, a game of polo brings all the English together—some to play, some to look on. We all meet at lunch; the afternoon is spent on the polo ground, where two or three ladies and a few children are often to be found as spectators. Then comes a cheery party round the tea-table. As the sun gets low, those who live near mount and ride off in good spirits, after a stirring game and the sight of fresh faces. Some stay for the night, enjoying a sociable evening round the piano, when sacred music and hymns recall home Sundays in the past. It is a bright day in the week for those who during the other six live a solitary life, without hearing English spoken from morning till night, getting up at dawn to spend the day in the saddle, working cattle (that is, counting, marking, and separating them), and superintending ploughing, harrowing, or sowing.

Far less stirring is a lady's life: except for a ride or drive, she never leaves the house. If she has children, she must be always with them, for a good nurse is not easily found, and, even with one, she cannot leave home with a mind at rest, knowing that there is no doctor, or even an experienced friend at hand, who can be summoned in case of illness. I have seen some brave matrons go off for a *paséo* with all their boys and girls and babies; but this can hardly be an enjoyable holiday for them or the friends they visit. As a good cook is quite an impossibility in camp, the lady of the house has to spend most of her time in the kitchen. The dairy also must be under her special care, as no native understands how to make butter. Naturally, if a woman is interested in housekeeping, she has plenty of scope and material for her talents, and nowhere is a comfortable home more appreciated than in this land of roughing it. Of course, in the more civilised parts it is different, and indeed life is much the same as life at home in an ordinary country house. Both inside and outside it is a life free from many irksome conventional restraints, and from all passing fashions, where each household is modelled and directed according to its own ideas of what works best and is most comfortable; but it is usually a life wanting in culture, and art, and good music, such as may be found in the most out-of-the-way corners of Old England.

S. S. M.

AN AWKWARD FIX.

A BUSH ADVENTURE.

By JOHN MACKIE.

WHEN I went out in '82 to the Gulf of Carpentaria, it was undoubtedly a wild and unsettled place. Burketown, a resurrected township smelling of sawdust and whisky, was the *Ultima Thule* of civilisation in that part of Australia. The country to the west of it was inhabited only by a few squatters at long intervals apart, or by roving bands of wild blacks, and was the happy hunting-ground or hiding-place of a number of men wanted by the police for horse-stealing or something worse. The latter were dangerous and troublesome neighbours to have anything to do with. For obvious reasons, to recognise a man and call him by his proper name then, was, in nine cases out of ten, to commit an unpardonable error, and apt to lead to disagreeable consequences.

It was in the month of October, about the commencement of the thunder-storms and the hot weather, when, in charge of a wagon-load of goods, I found myself on my way to a cattle-station called Lily-lagoons that had just been opened up one hundred and thirty miles to the west of Burketown. It might have been about three o'clock in the afternoon when, seeing a storm gathering, our party pushed on so as to reach the shelter of one of those back-block shanties that spring up as if by magic wherever there is a chance of intercepting a few stray cheques, and to unhitch before the tropical downpour overtook us. I remember as I rode up to the rough slab building, with its bark roof, strip of veranda, and general air of untidiness, that I caught a glimpse of some men disappearing into the bush in rear of the buildings; they were making for a yard hard by, where I made sure their horses were. Such an experience is by no means an uncommon one in certain outlying parts of the Gulf country, where, generally speaking, there are always a few men keeping out of the way of the police, and who are apprehensive on the approach of strangers, and make themselves scarce until they are assured as to their identity.

Let the reader not put any erroneous construction upon my conduct when I admit sending a certain precocious larikin, whom I had met before, to make their minds easy and fetch them back. I could not afford to be other than on good terms with such a crew—horse flesh was a costly and difficult commodity to replace in the Gulf in those days. When I entered the rough bar-room, Cassidy, the publican, held out his right hand patronisingly towards me, and with his left placed a black bottle on the counter.

I shook hands with him and exchanged compliments; for Jack was as good as his master in the Gulf, so not to be hail-fellow-well-met with every one argued a sad lack of policy, and marked one as the possible victim of future misfortune. According to the custom of a stranger when entering a bush 'hotel,' I called upon the bleary-eyed and shaky-looking devotees of old Silenus, in the guise of several bushmen present, to 'breast the bar.' This they did with an alacrity which, if expended in a better cause, would have been praiseworthy in the extreme. As soon as possible, however, I escaped from the noisy and unpleasantly demonstrative little crowd, and went outside to await the team. I was selecting a spot on which to halt the wagon, when, from behind a huge blood-wood tree, there came a sound as of some one moaning, and going round, I discovered a man lying on his face, evidently in the clutches of that demon of the Gulf, malarial fever. He nervously grasped an empty canvas water-bag in one hand, and did not seem to be aware of my presence. I appropriated the bag, went down to the lagoon, filled it with water, and came back to him. Tapping him on the shoulder, I said: 'Here, mate; have a drink.'

Now, no one knows, save those who have experienced the torments of the fierce fever-thirst, what a pleasant salutation this is. When addressed, he rolled over on his back, and I saw his face for the first time. Having a good memory for 'descriptions,' I recognised him. He was Billie Main, a young fellow not yet four-and-twenty years of age, and who had at least half-a-dozen warrants out against him for horse-stealing in various parts of the colony. Not utterly bad, however, or without certain good points, strange as it may seem; but, alas! easily led: one who, from the commission of a foolish and unpremeditated act of dishonesty, and the keeping of bad company, had been led to commit more serious crimes, until he had cut himself off from all chance of honest employment, and now led the miserable life of a hunted wild animal.

There is little that is in reality attractive in the lives of such as Billie, in spite of what a certain absurd and pernicious kind of literature says, and which is generally penned by those who know nothing of the stern and hideous truth. There was nothing in Billie's face that was suggestive of the criminal and foolhardy deeds for which he had been noted. As it was, I was an utter stranger to him, moreover, 'some one whom he could not exactly make out;' so for the minute he regarded me with not a little apprehension on his face, and said: 'Then you're not a trap?'

'What do you take me for?' I responded, knowing there was only one way of talking to such men, and I confess feeling not a little sorry for him in his helpless condition; he looked so utterly wretched and neglected. 'You'd better take a drink, like a good fellow. And look here; you want to get back to the shanty, for there's a thunder-storm coming up. I'll stow your saddles and gear under the tarpaulin of my wagon when it comes—and here it is.'

And up lumbered the heavily-laden wagon, with its driver, 'offsider,' and twelve horses. I stowed away Billie's belongings; he all the time watching me with a strange mixture of surprise and curiosity.

'You're a new chum, I s'pose?' he remarked at length.

'Well, yes,' I answered; 'I don't suppose a couple of years in the country counts for much. But get up; it's going to rain.'

'Thought as much as how you were a new chum,' he said, paying no attention to my last remark, and taking another drink. 'When you've been in this country a little longer, you won't trouble your head 'bout every poor beggar you happens to find lying under a gum-tree, and whom you don't know.'

'Well, Billie Main,' I said, 'I happen to know you; and I do not mean to assert that the honour of your acquaintance is such that I'd care to go blowing about it to any of my very particular friends. But that has nothing to do with it. I've had the fever myself, and don't intend to let you lie here; so get up, my bold hero. Here, give me your arm: a drenching in the state you're in now would just about fix the business for you.'

'Well, you are a rum un,' he said, raising himself wearily on his hands into a sitting position. Then looking at me with a somewhat more reassured and pleasanter expression on his face, he added: 'S'pose I've got to do as you tell me, boss.'

His was a pinched, pale, weary-looking face—not the kind of face one would associate with the companionship of horse-thieves and, perhaps, murderers. His voice was pitched in that soft, drawling intonation peculiar to natives of New South Wales; and, in spite of the reputation he bore, he could look one squarely enough in the eyes. 'A good man gone wrong,' I thought, 'and neglect and ignorance at the bottom of it all.' That his natural inclinations were neither of the ungrateful nor vicious sort when uninfluenced by the 'flash,' bad company he had a weakness for, I knew; and despite what he said, I believe that Billie would have been the first man to help a stranger.

He was weak as a kitten; so giving him my arm, I led him over to the shanty, where he muttered a few words—of thanks, I suppose—and flinging himself down on a rude stretcher under the veranda, lay silent with his head in his hands. An hour or so later, when the fierce and sudden thunder-storm had lifted, we hitched up our team and went on again. But as for Billie, I did not see him again for two years. Strange rumours were afloat concerning him in the meantime; and once he was reported as having stolen horses at three different places, widely apart, at the same time, which goes to prove the truth of the adage, 'Give a dog a bad name, and you may as well hang him.'

A cold-blooded murder had been committed on the Georgetown gold-diggings, and the police wanted a man named M'Donell, badly, for it. Indeed, he had committed more than one murder; but as he was well known to be a desperate and dangerously reckless man, those who were inclined to assist the law were chary about meddling with him. Since the Georgetown murder, the police had been scouring the country everywhere; but then, Australia is quite a respectable-sized hiding-place, and nothing had been heard of him.

It was late in the afternoon, in the month of October, and I had occasion to visit a distant part of our main paddock fence, some ten miles away from the head-station. This fence ran parallel to the only track (that is, trail or road) in that part of the country, which was the Port Darwin track, but was some two miles off it. I was alone; and, strange to say, contrary to my wont, had left my revolver behind. I was pacing along easily, admiring the beauty of the evening, and thinking of nothing in particular, when amongst the trees, some hundred yards outside the fence, I observed the glimmering of a fire. Blacks or white men? At least it would not be difficult to see; so putting my horse at the fence, I took the top-rail neatly. This practice of mine—always teaching my horse to jump—was to stand me in good stead yet.

White men at the 'Yellow water-hole'—but what were they doing so far off the track? In another minute I had ridden right in amongst them, and unthinkingly jumped off my horse. In another minute I would have given all I possessed to have been on his back again, and anywhere but in that company. There were three men, and they had neither seen nor heard me approach. One was stooping over the fire in the act of taking a damper from the ashes; and the other two were sitting with their backs against a fallen tree, evidently enjoying a smoke. However, I stammered out 'Good-evening, mates,' and tried to look as if I were glad at having dropped across them.

Then I experienced a chilling sensation of dismay; for as the two men leaped to their feet, I recognised the notorious M'Donell, as bloodthirsty and unprincipled a wretch as ever lived. There was no mistaking him: the same bill that offered the five hundred pounds reward that would lead to his capture described him too fully. There was the bluish scar right across the left cheek; the cruel, shifty black eyes, and the coarse, animal face. The second man, Smythe—M'Donell's companion in crime—was not an unhandsome man, but still evil-looking. They were both men who would think no more of shooting any one who stood between them and liberty than they would think of crushing a spider. But, suddenly, the third man turned, and I saw who it was—Billie Main. He looked somewhat anxious for a minute when he recognised me; but suddenly his brow cleared and he came forward.

Now, I confess that though Billie bore none of the best of characters—indeed the reverse—I was somewhat relieved at seeing him there. I could not help thinking that there was a something about him, in spite of his unenviable reputation, which hinted at his not being destitute of common humanity. I had a pretty shrewd guess that M'Donell and Smythe, divining I had recognised them, would not care about letting me go back again to civilisation, knowing that the police were somewhere in the neighbourhood. Oh, how foolish I appeared in my own eyes, having come out without my revolver! I was in an awkward fix, truly. I saw the two first-mentioned men slip their hands down towards their revolver pouches. Then M'Donell, looking around to see if I were alone, sang out: 'Hilloa! mister, what the dickens do you mean by riding into a man's camp like this, and making so mighty free?'

But here Billie came to my assistance, for with a ready laugh and shaking me heartily by the hand, he said to M'Donell: 'It's all right, Dan: it's Dick Holmes, one of the boys, and one of the right sort—I'll answer for him. He's head-stockman to old "T. B.," and minds his own business. I'll go bail he'll keep his mouth shut.'

Inwardly I blessed Billie's presence of mind and tact; so seeing that my only chance of being allowed to leave that company was by playing a part and conciliating them, I tied up my horse alongside one of theirs that stood saddled, hard by, and said to M'Donell: 'A nice sort of reception you'd give a man, mate. But I'll forgive you if you give me a drink of tea and a fill of tobacco. I came away without any this morning, and have been riding all day. Ah! that's better'—this to M'Donell, who had indicated the billy alongside the fire, with an inclination of his head. I took a drink of tea and cut a fill of tobacco from the plug that Smythe handed me. Now, hospitality of this nature is as much a sacred rite with the Australians as the breaking of bread is with the people of the East, so I felt somewhat more at my ease.

I could not help admiring Billie's cunning; for after one glance at me that was full of meaning, he talked as if he had known me for years, and in a way that, had any unenlightened party overheard, would have seriously compromised my character. Of course I saw his drift, which was to impress his comrades with the idea that I was the last man in the world to go talking about their whereabouts. I must confess that his evident anxiety to put me in a good light in their eyes, struck me with a rather unpleasant significance. For desperate men all three, and with the shadow of the gallows resting over two of them, was it likely that they would let me, a comparative stranger, walk right out of their camp, perhaps right into a police one, and 'give them away,' just when they were within some thirty miles of the Northern Territory boundary line, past which the Queensland police might not follow them?

And all the time I could see M'Donell was turning over something in his mind. Only once did I catch the restless glint of those ferret-like, black eyes, and they convinced me that there was little chance of leaving that camp alive, if he only took it into his head that I was not to be trusted. As it was, he and Smythe observed a disconcerting silence, and I replied and talked to Billie in a strain that it is to be hoped I shall never require to adopt again when talking to any one. Let a man's life be at stake, however, and he will do many a thing his conscience condemns. And, after all, I frankly confess to being no hero. It helps to keep me from having any inordinate opinion of myself now, when I think that, had a stranger heard me talking then, he would have thought I was a fit companion for Billie and his mates.

But it would not do to stop in that camp too long, or they might mistake my motives. Besides, I was becoming all the time more nervous on account of the peculiarly sinister manner of M'Donell and Smythe, and was anxious to have it over—such as it might be.

And now the go-go-burra or laughing-jackass had begun his noisy cachinnation, as he does first thing in the morning and just before sundown. Innumerable tree-frogs, and members of the insect world, now that the sun was getting lower and the air became cooler, began to make the Australian forest instinct with strange sounds, the like of which can only be heard in a tropical forest at night-fall. Flocks of screeching parrots and parrakeets, many-hued pigeons, and noisy leather-heads, swooped down to drink at the water-hole as if oblivious of our presence; and the graceful fronds of palms, with their lace-like tracery, became darkly and sharply silhouetted against the gray sky.

It was a strange and significant fancy that struck me just then, that some of their drooping leaves should resemble the nodding plumes on a hearse. It is strange, but true, that in positions of the most imminent danger the most trivial details will impress themselves on one's mind. But it was necessary that I should have daylight to leap back over the fence again, so I rose from the ground on which I had seated myself. I do not deny that it cost me an effort even to take this urgent step. It was no mere presentiment, but a palpable sense of imminent and impending danger that possessed me now.

'Well, mates, time I was going,' I said. 'By the way, if you want a "fifty" of flour, we can let you have it. Billie can come along with me, and I'll slip it out to him. No one need know who gets it. If you're going into the Territory, you may find it useful.'

Billie jumped at the idea; but the other two silenced him. 'They did not require it,' they said. 'In fact, they were nearer the station than they cared about.'

I walked towards my horse. Now, I think there is no more disagreeable sensation than to turn your back to a man and think that he is meditating putting a bullet into you. You dare not look round in case you may precipitate the action; and you feel a cold, creepy sensation running down your spine, as if some one were pouring cold water down your back. It is a horrible thing to think that you may be launched into eternity at any moment without preparation. My fingers were twitching nervously as I untied the reins from the tree, and prepared to mount. The three men had drawn together; but I could not look at them. How utterly at their mercy I was then! Just as I put my left foot into the stirrup, there was a sudden movement—an imprecation—the 'ping' of a pistol. '*Zip!*'—a bullet buried itself in the bark of a tree close to my head, and M'Donell exclaimed: 'Curse you, Billie, you've spoiled the shot!'

I sprang into the saddle, just in time to see Billie endeavouring to prevent M'Donell from firing again. 'Hold hard, my hearty!' cried the latter. To lie well forward on my horse, and dig my heels well into his flanks, was the work of a second. Like a bolt shot from a crossbow, 'Eclipse' sprang forward and dashed away through the scrub.

Ping! ping! ping!—something like a red-hot needle being thrust through my left arm, and a shot that made the blood spurt from the neck of my poor horse. A narrow shave, truly! I was now running some hundred yards from the fence and parallel to it. In another minute I heard the dull, quick thud of a horse's hoofs behind me. Looking back, I saw M'Donell, hatless, evil-looking, and with a revolver in his right hand, tearing after me, mounted on the horse I had seen tied up in the camp. I knew now that he meant to get close up alongside me so as to make sure work of both me and 'Eclipse.'

Oh, if I could only have had a weapon of some sort in my hand to have faced that fiend! But strategy was my only hope. 'Eclipse' was a jumper, and nothing more. I knew it was only a question of time till M'Donell was alongside.

It was a mad, wild ride. Trees and bushes flew past at express speed. Like a man who has been snatched from the jaws of death by drowning, I can still recall distinctly every soul-harrowing, every complex, pertinent, and trivial thought that coursed through my brain just then. I can remember speculating on the theories of the Greek philosopher regarding the soul after death; even wondering if the hands at the station would find my lifeless body, provided M'Donell did not burn it. I can remember thinking that this neck-or-nothing ride of mine resembled one I had read of in some old German legend, or Tam o' Shanter's by the waters of Doon. But the Scottish farmer's gray mare had a good hard road to stretch her limbs on, while poor 'Eclipse' had to dash and dodge through treacherous forest country. I looked once over my shoulder, and saw the ugly face of M'Donell with a wicked grin upon it. He was gaining upon me at every stride, and there was a deadly glitter in his cold, black eyes—no mercy there. Another hundred yards, and then his horse would be close upon mine. Now for a supreme effort.

Quick as thought I pulled 'Eclipse' over to the right, and M'Donell shot past with a curse. Now for the fence. I bent low, and shouted to my horse: it was neck or nothing, life or death. M'Donell had wheeled and was close upon me. Would he follow, or would he shoot? My heart was in my mouth, but 'Eclipse' took the top-rail in that waning light like a bird—and cleared it. Bravo, 'Eclipse!'

Clatter—c-r-rash!

I looked back. M'Donell's horse had jumped foul of the top-rail, and striking it, pitched wildly, rolling over and over again with its rider. There was an explosion: M'Donell had shot himself with his own revolver in the fall, and lay like a bundle of rags on the ground. When I picked him up, he was stone-dead—gone to answer for his crimes before a higher tribunal than any man could arraign him at.

I rode to the station, and found the troopers there. Hurrying back we surprised Smythe, who had followed up and discovered his dead mate. He was too much stunned and taken aback to make much of a resistance, and in two minutes the cold, gleaming handcuffs were on his wrists. But Billie had fled the camp; doubtless apprehensive of M'Donell's anger for his interference on my behalf. I confess to having been glad of this. Poor Billie! he was meant for better things; he was at least not one of those on whom a kindly meant action is thrown away.

SONNET.

Old thoughts, old memories of days gone by,
Lift their dead faces from the shroud of years,
And crowd my path, to-night—I know not why!—
Pleading, with ceaseless voices, in mine ears,
For recognition and remembrance. Chill,
Chill too, and bitter is the wintry blast;
And yet, methinks, upon it lingers still
The fragrant breath of summer nights long past
Hoarse is the murmur of the river too;
Yet in its voice is echoed o'er and o'er
The old sweet song we heard long, long ago,
That harvest night when, ling'ring by the shore,
Beneath the sheen of holy stars we stood,
Nor dreamt of winter winds or tempests rude.

M. C. C.

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THE RISING OF THE BRASS MEN.

It was nine o'clock, one sultry evening early in the present year, and had therefore been dark some two and a half hours, as a solitary white man patrolled the clearing surrounding the factory at the mouth of the Nun River. To the rear and on both sides lay the great African forest, in most places a horrible quagmire of putrid mud and slime, out of which, supported on their high arched roots, and with branches growing down and again taking root in the mire, rose the mangrove trees. In other parts where the ground lay firmer grew lofty cotton-woods, with an almost impenetrable mass of thorny bushes and creepers plaited round their bases. On the remaining side flowed the Nun River, the principal of the Niger's manifold mouths, here about a mile wide, and dividing the two dense forests. On either bank for hundreds of miles stretched the mangrove swamps, the trees growing out of fathomless mud, intersected by muddy creeks winding like tunnels under the interlacing branches.

Over river and forest hung a white mist, heavy with the smell of rotting leaves and exhalations of the swamps, which no white man may breathe uninjured, and which to many brings ruined constitutions or swift death from malarial fever. After the fierce heat of the day, the white man shivered a little as the clammy mist soaked through his clothing, and lighted a cigar as some feeble attempt to counteract the probable dose of fever. Listening sharply, he passed along the strip of fetid mud which formed the river bank, and found the black sentinels at their posts half hidden by the mist and the dripping bushes. Then rapidly returning, he climbed the stone staircase rising to the factory, which, as is necessary along this coast, was supported some twenty feet from the ground, to raise it a little above the worst of the miasma (for here, if a white man sleep on the ground-level, he shall surely die), and entered the brightly lighted room. At the table sat two men, another Englishman and a young French officer, both haggard and with the fever-smitten look of this blighted land; but while the Englishman appeared anxious and ill at ease, his companion, with the *insouciance* of his nation, sat smiling and careless. They had sufficient to justify any anxiety; for weeks past the Nimbi negroes, incensed at the attempt of the British Company to charge them a duty on their trade, had threatened to come down and kill the white men and burn the factory; but by the self-sufficiency and contempt of every native nation, which England has so often dearly paid for, the warning had been slighted until now, when most of the black troops were away, and only some few remained with three Europeans, the blow was to fall.

All day strange canoes had been seen coming down the river to disappear among the mangrove swamps, and the few river men who worked among the Krooboys round the factory, by that singular means which all natives have of transmitting news faster than it can be carried by any mail-canoe or steam-launch, were whispering that a fleet of large canoes and at least nine hundred men from the Brass River, another deltaic arm of the Niger, would that night wipe out every man around the factory and utterly destroy it. In front of the factory a small redoubt was hastily made out of salt-bags, and a machine gun mounted in it; the few black troops were supplied with as much ball cartridge as they could carry; and when night fell with the suddenness of the tropics, all waited with anxious hearts for what might befall. Besides the three Europeans, there were some two to three hundred coloured hands around the factory, clerks from Sierra Leone and Lagos, and the ever-cheerful and generally to be depended on Kroo labourers. These were, however, in the same peril as the whites, as one negro tribe hates another with a deadly hatred; and the river men, who form powerful nations and possess cities of forty thousand inhabitants, are a cruel and vindictive race, and allow no interlopers in their dominions. The only one at ease among them was the black printer, who had been to the Brass city, where he had friends and relations, and where he assured his envious listeners he would be treated as an honoured guest.

Hour after hour passed slowly, the fireflies flashed and sparkled in the wet grass, and no sound was to be heard except the rapid rush of the ebb-tide and the croaking of frogs in the swamps. The moon rose and the mist grew lighter, showing on the one side patches of the gleaming river, and on the other the dark wall of the forest. One by one the natives, with the happy carelessness of the negro, dropped off to sleep; but above, the three Europeans kept close watch on the veranda, taking turn about to see that the outlying sentries were awake at their posts. So the night crept on until in his gay manner the Frenchman began to abuse the Brass men for keeping them waiting. 'Don't be impatient, Daddy,' his companion said; 'if they come, the brutes will be here an hour after midnight.' Then as the time was drawing near, the lamp in the room was turned low, spare rifles taken from the rack and laid on the table, besides a supply of opened cartridge packets, and then with rifle in hand the three sat quietly in the shadow on the veranda.

'Listen,' said the doctor; and up the river they could plainly hear the 'chunk, chunk' of paddles. In another moment there was a loud report from a good-sized gun in the bows of a canoe, and then with howls and shouts the Brass men rushed upon the factory from the bush and river simultaneously. With their sharply filed matchets the factory Krooboys made as brave a stand as they could, but they were outnumbered six to one, and the Brass men were armed with guns. Ball or shot they rarely use, but prefer a handful of broken cast-iron potleg, which at close quarters makes a ghastly wound. In a few minutes the black labourers were mostly killed, and the remnant broke and fled for the salt shed. Here they were met by another company of their enemies, and were taken between the two. It was an indiscriminate slaughter. Many were unarmed, and those who had weapons had no chance against numbers. After a few minutes there was not a Krooboy left standing, excepting those who saved their lives by a timely flight into the bush.

Then the fiendishness of the river men found an outlet. In front of the salt shed grew a large tree. On either side of the trunk stood a huge negro with a matchet. His companions, dragging such as were not killed outright to their feet, hurled them against the tree; and as they did so, the two matchets came down, shearing through skull or neck, and the victim fell a mangled corpse at the roots of the tree. One after another were so killed, many with the negro's apparent carelessness of death, and the others with fearful shrieks. When all were killed, and only a pool of blood and a ghastly heap lay at the foot of the tree, a rush was made for the clerks' quarters; and in spite of a feeble revolver fire, an entrance was made, several were killed on the spot, and the rest tied hand and foot and hurled through the windows.

Then the united body moved towards the Europeans' house, a grotesque procession, most of them dripping with blood from their own or their victims' wounds, all tall, strongly made men, with their hair knitted up into many fantastic plaits, many armed with guns, some with matchets, and some with the horrible African spears with barbed edges and sharp hooks. As they came, the two or three black soldiers left pointed and fired the Nordenfelt gun from the salt-bag redoubt. After the flash of the gun and a yell which told of the result, the whole force with a wild rush swept up to the house and over the redoubt. Bravely standing to their post, the two black soldiers struggled with the gun; but the discharge had jammed the breech-block, and it was useless.

Stabbed and horribly mutilated, they fell at their post, while the savage mob swept round to the stone stairs leading to the veranda. Up the first two or three steps they swept, a disordered crowd, firing their long guns indiscriminately wherever the crush would allow them to move an arm. Then the three white men appeared at the head of the stairway standing in the shadow, while the blacks below were in the bright moonlight. They were not soldiers taught to shoot with a wooden, mechanical movement, but sportsmen who knew their weapon, balance, and pull off; and as the repeating-rifles flashed and flashed, the lower steps became a shambles, savage after savage fell, blocking the way for his followers, until they turned tail and bolted for cover. Then the defenders dropped back against the wall and hurriedly refilled their magazines. In a few moments the attack began again, this time the Brass men coming on in a thinner body. Still, not one gained more than a few steps before he fell back on the writhing heap below. It was too hot to last; no one could stand against the repeating-rifle in such hands, and again the crowd broke and fled.

This time a few only remained in front of the factory, firing as fast as they could reload their guns at the veranda, where they supposed the garrison to lie. The rest went round to the rear of the building and underneath, and commenced to shoot through the wooden floors from below and through the building from side to side; while others, dragging up a good-sized cast-iron gun from one of the war canoes, fired large shot and handfuls of stones through floor and walls, while the little garrison lay down in the deepest shadow they could find. For a long time the fusilade continued steadily, while the white men, unable to reply, crouched anxiously in their shelter. Then it ceased, except a few dropping shots, and the cries and groans from the compound, mixed with wild howls of delight, told that the Brass men were killing their prisoners and looting the stores.

Slowly the time passed, until after the usual brief African dawn the sun rose, and the three Europeans looking round, saw the ghastly heap at the foot of the stairway, where still some one moved an arm from time to time or moaned faintly; all around them the wooden sides of the houses were torn and riddled with shot. The worst was that, in the clear light, they could not stand at the stairhead, but had to retreat into the room facing it. By-and-by the blacks again gathered in front of the house and moved towards the stairs; but after a few moments' quick firing, during which a number of them fell, they retired, leaving the Europeans still unhurt, but with less than a dozen cartridges left. It was then suggested that three should be put on one side, so that at the last they should not fall into the hands of their enemies alive. Here the Frenchman interposed, saying that in any case they could only die, and that it were better to fire every single shot, and no one knew what might happen at the very latest moment.

So they stood with parched mouths and throats, and smoke-grimed faces, waiting the end, till the boom of a gun rang out, followed by the deep tone of a steam-whistle and the R.M.S. *Bathurst* slowly steamed round the point close inshore. In a few moments the negroes were in full flight. Away they went, dragging with them bales and boxes, wounded comrades and prisoners; and ten minutes after the arrival of the steamer, a fleet of large canoes in full flight were all that remained, and the plucky defence of the factory came to an end.

The poor prisoners, however, fared worse. They were carried away two days' journey through the rivers and creeks, nailed to the bottom of the canoes through hands, feet, and arms; and on reaching the town of Nimbi, were killed and eaten: the printer, in spite of his reliance on his friends there, suffering the same fate, after untold agony from heat and thirst, lying for two days in the fierce glare of the African sun, with the rusty nails eating into his flesh.

The last scene of the tragedy was enacted when Her Majesty's gunboats went up the river and burned the town.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XXXIII.—IN THE LION'S MOUTH.

'No, Mr Wynyan, certainly not.—By the way, you have assured me that you were the late Mr Dalton's trusted assistant, and helped him in this invention.'

'I may claim, sir, to having been the inventor.'

'Very well, then,' said the gentleman addressed, as he sat back in his chair in the well-furnished, sombre room in one of the Government buildings; 'we will take it that you are the inventor.'

'May I ask whom I am addressing?' said Wynyan.

'Of course. I am the Under-secretary, and the communications made to your firm have—of course, inspired by my chief—come from me, in whose hands the settlement of this business has been placed. I have endeavoured to show you, Mr Wynyan, that my department is inspired by no inimical feeling; there is no desire for persecution, but we have a duty to perform.'

'Naturally, sir.'

'After certain communications with your late principal, it was decided that it was the duty of the Government to take up the invention offered to them, and they did so in a frank spirit, paying handsomely with the money for whose proper disbursement they are answerable to the State. Of course, as soon as we find that we have been—there I must use a strong term—swindled, we are bound to act. You grant that?'

'Of course, sir.'

'You grant, then,' said the Under-secretary with a smile, 'that we have been—swindled?'

'Certainly.'

'And that it is our duty to proceed against the firm in some form or other, for, when we enter into a matter like this, we become commercial, and must act accordingly. If your firm had bought an engine of another firm, and it did not prove to be what was represented when you parted with your money, I presume that you would commence an action against the people who had defrauded you?'

'Certainly, sir,' said Wynyan firmly. 'I do not join issue with you in the matter. I merely come here and place the question before you as it stands. It is a repetition, perhaps, of a great deal that I said to you at my last interview.'

'Pray go on, Mr Wynyan. We have no wish to be unjust. You will find us amenable.'

'Then, sir, let me assure you that my late principal, Mr Dalton, was a man of the most sterling honesty of character.'

'So we were informed.'

'Everything he promised would have been done; but either before or subsequent to his death, the idea of the invention was stolen, and sold to this foreign Government.'

'By whom?'

Wynyan was silent.

'Give me the names of the party or parties.'

'I cannot, sir. Of course I have my suspicions, but I cannot make the charge upon so weak a basis.'

'Give me the name, and our legal advisers shall settle whether they will investigate the matter, and bring it home.'

'No, sir,' said Wynyan firmly. 'I cannot expose a man who may be innocent, to the trouble that this proceeding would entail.'

'Very well, Mr Wynyan; then perhaps it would be better for our interview to come to a close.'

'No, sir,' said the engineer sturdily; 'hear me out, if you please. That invention was like the breath of life to me for years. I worked at it as hard as man could work. Again and again I thought I had achieved success, but always there was some little thing to necessitate a reconstruction.'

'I suppose so,' said the Under-secretary, smiling. 'Mechanism is a troublesome thing—even the construction of a cabinet. Well, Mr Wynyan?'

'At last, sir, I was able to show Mr Dalton that the final difficulty had been surmounted.'

'And we bought every right in the ingenious idea, and it has proved worthless.'

'How, sir?' said Wynyan warmly.

'How? My good sir, it is no longer a secret.

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The idea has been sold to a foreign Government, and we have no guarantee that the new buyers may not sell it to a dozen more powers. It was the fact of its being unique that made it worth our while to buy.'

'It is still unique, sir.'

'Ah, you said something of this kind the last time you were here. Prove your words.'

'Easily enough, sir. Metaphorically, that invention turns upon one point or pin. If that pin is absent, the whole thing falls to pieces.'

'Carry out your metaphor, sir. What is that point or pin—money?'

'No, sir: my mind. I tell you plainly and simply, that the purchase made by that foreign Government is absolutely worthless unless they purchase me as well.'

'And our purchase would have been absolutely worthless unless we purchased you,' said the Under-secretary, with a slight curl of the lip.

'Absolutely, sir.'

'Ah, then now we understand each other, Mr Wynyan. I am glad you have spoken out. Continue, sir. What is your price?'

Wynyan leaped to his feet, and his face flushed up.

'What do you take me for, sir?' he cried.

'Pray be calm, Mr Wynyan,' said the Under-secretary quietly. 'I take you for a business man; that is all.'

'A poor one, I am afraid, sir. You misunderstand me quite.'

'Then what do you mean?'

'This, sir. I would give everything to carry out Mr Dalton's invention to perfection, so that his bargain might be all that he wished.'

'But you ask some payment for this, sir?'

'Payment!' cried Wynyan scornfully. 'Would it not be payment enough for me to be able to prove that my detractors are obliged to humble themselves before me? To prove that I was slandered when I was accused of this base theft—to show that my dear old friend was an honourable gentleman—that I, whom he trusted, was worthy of that trust. Sir, I beg, I implore of you to stop all investigation, to let me go and finish the work, and prove to you that what I say—is correct.'

'That you are one with some personal end to serve, an enthusiast, or an honest man.'

'Put it in that way, if you like, sir,' said Wynyan coldly; 'will you trust me?'

'I am only a public servant, Mr Wynyan, bound to report all this to my chief and a committee. I must tell you, too, that this is not a private matter: Governments cannot afford to have bowels of compassion.'

'But it is for the public a national benefit.'

'Perhaps! But before we go further, Mr Wynyan, let me ask you a question. You have given me some reasons why you wish to work out this business; but to my mind they are insufficient. You have some far stronger motive than this moral revenge upon your enemies, whoever they may be. Come, sir, confess.'

Wynyan darted an indignant look at the speaker, as he once more rose.

'I have done all I can, sir,' he said. 'Once more I tell you that the sale is valueless, as time will prove. You will not trust me?'

'Answer my question, Mr Wynyan. You have a stronger motive than any that I have heard?'

'Yes,' said Wynyan, 'I have.'

The Under-secretary touched a bell to indicate that the interview was at an end, but Wynyan stood looking at him interrogatively.

'I can say no more, Mr Wynyan,' was the answer to his mute question. 'Everything which has passed will be laid before my chief. As soon as possible you shall hear the result.'

OUR BUTTER SUPPLY.

The boast of Australian shippers of butter, that in a few years they would not only capture a large portion of our trade in that indispensable commodity, but drive Denmark out of the field, has not been as yet fulfilled. But that the advent of our colonial cousins on the scene has effected a revolution in the trade cannot be disputed; while the manufacturers of substitutes have strong reason to regret the day when the perfection of refrigerator accommodation on the steamers plying from the South Pacific rendered it possible for butter to be landed here from the Antipodes practically as fresh as when it left the creameries on the other side. The table given below will show how the old world and the new compete for our custom in this respect, and it will be gathered therefrom that Australasia has more than doubled her export during the past three years. This has not been brought about without a certain amount of disaster to those concerned, and the season for colonial butter just closed will long be remembered by the trade as the worst on record.

In the days before Victoria entered on the business of butter-shipping, it was the rule that the winter months afforded the best time of the year for the butter-shippers on the Continent and farmers at home to get good prices for their dairy produce, as production was at its minimum, and demand was invariably at the heels of supply. But steam and the cold chamber altered the whole aspect of affairs when the Victorian Government granted its bonus on butter shipped; and as it is summer there when it is winter here, prices rapidly dropped on the market, until the winter became the cheapest period. The working classes—indeed, all sections of the population have benefited largely by the intense competition. Formerly it was impossible ever to get pure butter at a shilling a pound. There was certainly sold at the price a certain article bearing a strong resemblance to the product of the churn, but stearine entered largely into its composition, and the frequent prosecutions following on public analyses caused people to shun the low-priced article.

To Australia we owe the appearance of pure butter at a shilling a pound, which the poor have been able to purchase all through the trying winter of 1894-95; while during the spring and summer unprecedented prices have been reached from the same cause, butter being retailed everywhere at tenpence a pound, while in some poor districts it has been vended at eightpence—a Midland firm, more enterprising than careful of its neighbouring traders' necessity of getting a 'living profit,' actually, at the worst period of depression in the wholesale market, selling pure butter at sixpence a pound. This has been rendered possible by the abnormally low currencies ruling on the wholesale market, where butter has sold as low as thirty-five shillings a hundredweight, very good butter being often procurable between sixty and eighty shillings. Denmark, as we have said, has not been driven from the field—having, in fact, increased her output—but she has had to be content with much lower prices, and this season her butter has sold for less than ever before. Her enormous trade with us has been built up by upright trading and the scrupulous vigilance of the authorities, the laws against adulteration being very severe, every package shipped at Copenhagen being subjected to rigid scrutiny to ascertain its purity. Thus Danish butter has come to be a synonym with the trade and the public for a pure article, and the Committee which controls the quotations at Copenhagen has been able to get a high price for the farmers of Denmark, because there was no such guarantee elsewhere. Here comes the proof of the sound business principles animating colonial shippers from their first entering on the enterprise. Government inspection has accompanied the bonus, and merchants here have ascertained that Australian butter is as pure as the Danish product. Thus the trade has been helped to magnify so considerably in such a short time.

But it is one thing to make a trade, another to keep up prices. It was easy for Denmark to do so in the old days, with no competitors worth speaking of; but with so many rivals in the field it is now practically impossible. France has lost a large portion of our trade, mainly because of the sophistication which her reckless shippers have indulged in, and she is not likely to recover the ground lost. But there are rivals to Denmark and Australia nearer home. The secret of the foreigners' success on our markets is the lack of uniformity which has always prevailed with dairy farmers in this country. Grocers know that, however pure and intrinsically good butter from English dairies may be, it is not likely to be the same in appearance and texture two weeks running; and as this results in the housewife raising a complaint that the butter is not of the same quality as previously supplied, grocers prefer, even in country districts, to go to the merchant selling foreign butter, who will agree to give it them the same in appearance week after week throughout the year. The solitary system of production in vogue in England is responsible for this, while the system practised in Denmark and the colonies of working on a co-operative plan—all the farmers in a district bringing their milk to a central factory or creamery, and receiving their share of the net results—is conducive to the production of butter of uniform quality. Lessons travel slowly in England, and the failure of a factory, erected on the Danish model in Wales a little while back, to pay its projectors, is a proof of the inertness of farmers where their own interests are concerned.

But in Ireland—whence one hears so much of distress, but seldom of success—absolutely gigantic strides have been made of late years, and with a soil and climate exceptionally fitted for the dairy industry, a trade has grown up of such proportions as to form no mean antagonism to Denmark. Many factories and creameries are in existence in Ireland now, turning out thousands of pounds of splendid butter, and Denmark has been made to feel the touch of the competition, having been entirely supplanted in some districts. It has been the rule for Danish butter to be at the top of the quotations, and when it was quoted at one hundred and forty-five shillings a hundredweight, as it was only three or four years ago, Ireland could not get within fifteen or twenty shillings of the quotation. But now the quality of her butter is so far recognised that it is always within a few shillings of its rival, while a short time ago the quotations were level for Danish and Irish in Liverpool. This is a department of our trade which we can only hope will largely increase, to the benefit of the sister kingdom, and it is certain that, now it has gone forward, it will not stop. Germany and Holland and the United States have dropped into the rear as factors in the situation, and France is following suit, though the decreases in shipment from these countries combined are fully made up for by increase of exports from the South Pacific; while in other directions besides Denmark and Australasia, efforts are being made to get a portion of the immense trade, which takes more than ten millions sterling a year out of the country.

In the days when Denmark was not the power in the trade it is now, and when competition over twelve thousand miles of ocean was not dreamt of, Canada had a fair portion of the butter trade then existing. But when the people there thought they could do just as they liked, and sent across stuff which was good enough when nothing else could be got, it was, of course, refused here as soon as we had so many sources of supply to turn to where a good article could be obtained. Shippers in Montreal have blinded themselves to the change that has come over the trade, and have persisted in placing butter bought cheap in the summer in cold storage, to await the advent of better prices, and have then shipped it when the bloom has disappeared and all its connection with the pastures of the Dominion has been effaced. The natural result has been that merchants here have refused to buy it save as a substitute for train-oil, and the trade has dwindled to miserable proportions. Now—as it would seem, too late—they have awakened to a sense of the big mistake they have been making, and shipments are coming forward in cool chambers, whence they are transferred from railway refrigerator cars. On all of the new supply a bonus of a cent a pound is paid by the province of Quebec, the Government being responsible for the railway and steamship arrangements. This has to be fresh-made creamery butter, and the design is to re-establish

Canada's credit on our markets. Should the return be in proportion to the outlay, other provinces will no doubt follow the lead, and Canada once again become prominent in our returns.

Whatever profit the Dominion may reap from the venture, it is clear that consumers here must benefit by another accession to the ranks of those now catering for our tables. They may certainly look for a continuance of low prices, for to this result everything seems to point, especially as the Australian season opened this year much earlier than usual, the first arrival of the 1895-6 make having been some time ago sold on the market. One other thing, too, consumers have to congratulate themselves upon—the removal, through the cheapness of butter, of temptation on the part of vendors to adulterate. The introduction of margarine has been a great boon to the poor when sold as such, but consumers always rather prefer the genuine article; and the era of low prices which is now on us has caused such a falling off in the demand for the substitute, that whereas in the first eight months of 1893 we imported 832,976 cwt. of margarine from abroad, the amount entering this year to the end of August has only been 597,423 cwt.; Holland, our chief source of supply, having lost custom to the extent of 157,603 cwt. in that period. In the table which follows, the chief sources of our butter supply are enumerated, but in 'other countries' lie concealed many centres near and remote whence demand might at any moment draw increased supplies.

COUNTRIES.	8 months, 1893. cwt.	8 months, 1894. cwt.	8 months, 1895. cwt.	8 months, 1893. Value.	8 months, 1894. Value.	8 months, 1895. Value.
Sweden	185,099	176,158	203,785	£1,001,407	£937,082	£1,075,028
Denmark	649,779	762,774	791,037	3,568,301	4,027,374	3,893,845
Germany	132,149	111,257	92,537	656,102	567,802	461,612
Holland	94,838	104,556	128,687	489,425	516,041	618,377
France	319,575	267,442	296,940	1,806,485	1,490,521	1,580,791
Australasia	101,095	203,760	245,940	519,792	999,696	1,090,428
Canada	13,232	2,908	8,353	57,123	11,624	32,002
United States	19,793	26,936	19,371	89,652	113,477	75,202
Other countries	77,216	99,281	129,318	393,995	489,931	634,047
Total	1,592,776	1,755,072	1,915,968	£8,582,282	£9,153,548	£9,461,332

PROOF POSITIVE.

CHAPTER III.

It was my eight-and-thirtieth birthday, the sixth of June, and I was crossing the fields outside the old cathedral city. I had been to see an out-lying patient of my employer's—a bed-ridden old woman, of as little importance in the world as myself, and I was now returning. The sun was high, and I had walked swiftly. I was glad to sit down in the shade of a broad elm near an old-fashioned country stile, for rest and coolness.

The city was so sleepy that no railroad came within two miles of it, but as I sat, I heard the puffing and screaming of a distant train. It stopped at the country station and went on again, sounding fainter and fainter, until it left the wide fields altogether silent. I must have fallen into a day-dream, and have allowed time to speed by me without counting, for it was the footstep of a passenger from that train which startled me (as it seemed) a mere minute after the noise of the engine had died away. A man vaulted the stile, and seeing me there, paused to assure himself of the way. A foreign accent struck my ear with a sense of odd familiarity. I looked up and recognised Dupré.

'Alwayne?' he said. The question declared itself in his look as plainly as in his voice. 'Is it Alwayne?' Before I could reply, he had seized my hand and held it strongly in both his own.

'My poor, dear Alwayne! My poor, poor, dear, dear fellow! I have been hunting you for half a year.'

I drew my hand from his grasp and faced him.

'This is not the greeting you gave me the right to expect from you,' I said.

'Ah no!' he answered. 'But you are proved to be innocent. And how shall I speak to you? How shall I ask your pardon?'

'As for that,' I told him, 'you may spare yourself the trouble. My innocence never should have needed proof to a man who knew me as well as you did. I vow to Heaven that I would have taken the word of no man in the world against you in such a case. There are men in the world who are not born to such a baseness as I stood accused of, and I am one of them.'

'Alwayne!' he said. 'Alwayne! Listen to reason. The missing money has been found. And where do you think? In the safe, in the room in which you slept on that unhappy night!'

He put this with such an air of conviction, that, although I had half turned to leave him, I paused and asked savagely, 'What of that?'

'What of that? It is as clear as day. You had seen the safe in the upper room. You had observed to the dear old Professor that the money was not secure there because the safe had no lock. You had noticed that the other safe in the room below closed with a snap. You went to sleep, dreamed of danger, got up in your sleep, took away the money for safety, locked it up, and had forgotten all about it in the morning.'

'Rubbish!' I answered. 'I never walked in my sleep in my life.'

'How do you know that?' he retorted. 'You know only, at the most, that you have never been told so. Come, my dear Alwayne, the facts are proven. There is no question of your intent. There is no doubt as to how the thing happened. And Miss Gordon, let me tell you, is more heartbroken since the money was found and returned to her, than even when the terrible truth seemed first to have been forced upon her. She saw you, you remember.'

'What she saw,' I answered wearily, but with unshaken certainty—'what she saw, I cannot tell, but me she did not see.'

'But the Professor saw you too. How should they both be mistaken? You carried a lighted candle, which you left upon the floor of the landing outside the room. You were seen clearly.'

I stood half confounded, and the fields, trees, and hedges seemed to spin about me. But for Dupré's hand I should have fallen, and for a second or two I felt precisely as I had done at the moment when we two last parted. My terror of a possible recurrence of what had happened then, served, I think, to distract my mind from the thought which oppressed it.

'You are better now,' said Dupré.

'It was not I,' I persisted.

'Well,' said Dupré, 'I have proof positive, and I will convince you. But I am going to the "Green Dragon" hotel here, and if you are well enough to walk, I will tell you something by the way.'

'I am well enough,' I answered brusquely. Seven or eight years ago I had been prosperous and honoured. Now, what was I? A human hack, blasted in repute, shattered, ruined. I can forgive myself for my disdain and bitterness.

'Well,' he said, accommodating his steps to mine, which were not so elastic as they had been half an hour before, 'I shall tell you how the money came to be found.'

'My good sir,' I responded, 'I have not the slightest interest in the matter.'

'Ah, but you will have, by-and-by,' he said. 'The old house was being pulled down, and a contractor had bought the material. When the safe was turned over, the cash-box within it rattled, and the safe being unlocked, the money was found. The contractor was an honest fellow, and was well paid for honesty, you may be sure. But more than the money was found.'

Here, again, he spoke with so marked an emphasis, that, though I would willingly have said good-bye to him and the whole question, I felt constrained to speak.

'What else was found?'

'That proof positive I spoke of,' he responded, and I lapsed into silence. 'You shall see it for yourself,' he went on, 'when we come to the hotel. But in the meantime, I have something else to tell you. I am not here alone. I chose to walk across the fields, because I wanted to arrange in my own mind how I should tell you everything when we met. My companions have been driven by the main road to the hotel, and though they have a mile farther to travel, they will be there before us. I am married, Alwayne, since we saw each other last, and my wife is with me.'

I said nothing, and had indeed nothing to say. I had been indifferent to everything for years, and the nerves of interest, once dulled by such an experience as mine, are slow to feel again.

'I have another companion on my journey, Alwayne, the saddest, gentlest, and most suffering creature under the blue sky. You have suffered—suffered horribly, degradingly, undeservedly. But, Alwayne, she has suffered too. You must not look to find her what she was.'

The nerves of feeling were wide awake upon a sudden. I felt my heart beat, and the colour alter on my cheek. I made no pretence of not understanding him.

'You have done no charity to either of us in bringing Miss Gordon here,' I said. 'It was her want of faith in me which has made my life what it is. It is through her that an innocent man has walked the world in shame.'

'She has suffered, Alwayne! She has suffered!'

'And I have suffered!'

'But you have had the consolation of your own honour all along.'

'A consolation, truly!' I answered. And indeed it has maddened me a thousand times, as it would madden any man who had my history, to see that stale and foolish fallacy held up for comfort. The man unjustly hated and despised has in his breast a wound that never rankled in a rogue's.

'You will see her, Alwayne?'

'No!' I answered, the more vehemently that all my heart went out to her.

'Come,' he said, linking his arm in mine. 'You do not yet believe that you were really seen. Now, if I prove that to your own satisfaction—if I force you to believe against yourself, that no hand but your own removed that cash-box, will you change your mind?'

'There is no evidence in the world which would make me credit it. What I know, I know.'

'Wait till I show you my evidence,' said Dupré. 'If you are convinced, will you consent to meet her?'

'If I am convinced,' I answered, 'yes!'

From that moment we walked on in silence, and I guided him to the old-fashioned hotel. He gave his name there, and a waiter led him at once to a private sitting-room. There he left me for a mere instant, returning with a despatch-box in his hand. He set this upon the table in the centre of the apartment, and opened it deliberately, revealing a black pad and a white pad.

'Before Miss Gordon went to rest on that memorable night,' he said, 'she wrote a letter to you—a happy, girlish letter. I have it here'—tapping his breast—'and I will show it to you in a moment. But first, will you lay the finger-tips of your right hand on this blackened pad? So. A gentle pressure. Now transfer them to the white sheet. So. Now take this monocle and examine that impression and compare it with this.'

He took a sheet of paper from his breast-pocket, and handed it to me. I read the words, 'Always, always, always, your own Kathryn,' and below the signature, I saw the clearly defined marks of four finger-tips. In a lightning flash, the memory of these blackened sheets of paper the Professor had been using for the skeleton leaves came back to me, and I set the marks made so long ago side by side with those so newly made. They were identical, a sign-manual no hand could forge. Each finger had its own delicate spiral pattern, and no other hand than mine in all the world could have left these two impressions.

'That little note,' said Dupré, tapping it as I held it in a shaking hand, 'was laid away in the cash-box until the morning. There was the something more which was found in the safe when it was opened. There was a sheet of newly prepared carbon paper on the table in Miss Gordon's room. You were seen to lay your hand upon it for a moment, as if to steady yourself.'

I sat down, feigning to compare the marks still further, but I saw nothing.

'They are alike,' I said at last, but Dupré had gone, without my notice.

I heard the rustle of a woman's dress, and turned. Kathryn stood there—how altered—how pale and troubled! She held her hands appealingly to me, and called me by my name.

'What can I say?' she asked me. 'I broke your heart to break my own.'

The tears in her beautiful eyes brimmed over, and I drew her to my heart.

A GOSSIP ABOUT PIANISTS.

By J. Cuthbert Hadden.

Of a couple of pianists; for we will talk only of great gods—of Rubinstein and of Bülow, both of whom have passed to their rest within the last few years. We have many pianists in these days, but we have no pianist with a personality that stands out like that of the two virtuosi just named. The modern school of technique has removed entirely the old difficulties of the keyboard, and the result has been a shoal of players who have captured the public with as much ease as a stage beauty captures the pit and the dress circle. It is true that other things besides talent have had to do with the making of some recent reputations. The pianist has been described as a pet of society, a man with a Polish name, who wins his first success through his photograph. But that is not the only way in which he may win success. He may win it, as Samson won his strength, by cultivating a superabundance of head-covering; for there is undoubtedly something in the remark of a cynical American, that 'people are a darned sight more interested in the colour of Paderewski's hair than they are in his tone colour.' He may win it, again, by a weird face; by a trick of posing at his instrument and making-believe to play divinely when he is only playing like a school-girl. He may win it, further, as Liszt used to say, by getting himself well watered in the newspapers; by ingeniously circulating a report of a deep-rooted mysterious grief; by never openly taking anything more solid in the way of nourishment than seltzer and cigarettes. Above all, he may win it if he only have that indefinable 'something' which has an inexplicable attraction for the weaker sex. All this is not to say that the pianist may make a reputation without talent; but talent is too often at the bottom and humbug at the top. With Rubinstein and Bülow it was all talent and no humbug; and we propose now to look for a little at these giants of the keyboard, and to look at them in a phase of their careers which has been somewhat unaccountably neglected by those who write for the general reader.

Standing together and alone in the highest rank of pianoforte virtuosi, no two men could in outward aspect have been more unlike than Liszt and Rubinstein. This was especially noticeable when, as sometimes happened, the two were seen together. Tall, stately, dandified, in light kid gloves, Liszt, with his cascade of white hair falling well over his shoulders, presented a curious contrast to the carelessly dressed Rubinstein with the lion-like head, set on broad, well-shaped shoulders, the tremendous brow, and the protruding cheek-bones. 'Little nose and much hair,' was Rubinstein's own description of himself, and the description was literally correct. He had a strong Beethovenish cast of feature, which was often remarked; and there is an authentic story of his being mistaken at an English provincial railway station for the late Charles Bradlaugh, who was expected to arrive by the same train. This, by the way, was a curious incident. On becoming aware of the mistake that was being made, Rubinstein entered thoroughly into the fun of the situation, and, being an excellent Biblical scholar, he improved the occasion by addressing his 'admirers' in terms which left them in some confusion as to Mr Bradlaugh's consistency. Rubinstein wore his jet-black hair like the mane of a lion. On one occasion he landed at a friend's house in Liverpool after having been for some time in Ireland, where he had allowed his locks to grow to inordinate length. He was persuaded to visit the hairdresser, who, of course, asked him whether he would have much taken off. On his replying in the negative, the operator ventured the remark: 'I would really advise you to have a good lot taken off, unless you wish to pass for a German fiddler!' Rubinstein laughed heartily at the sally, and Charles Keene having heard of it, the incident was presently immortalised in *Punch*. As a matter of fact, no musician was ever less of an exquisite than Rubinstein. He had no affectations, unless it were that curious disarray of the necktie seen in most of the photographs. He wore black broadcloth with a nap on it of the kind that parsons used to wear fifty years ago; and he would allow himself to become so shabby that railway guards often asked him to show his ticket before permitting him to enter a first-class carriage. He always wore a soft felt hat, and the more battered and disreputable it became, the fonder he seemed to grow of it. One can imagine the elegant Liszt being ashamed to be seen in his company—and indeed there is a doubtful story of the one having fled from the other in order to save his dignity.

A long and a bitter struggle he had, this Anton Rubinstein, before he secured his fame and his fortune. He used to delight in showing his friends the portrait of an old man who once bought all the tickets that *were* bought for one of his juvenile recitals. And he had even a better story than this. At Nijni-Novgorod, when he was only thirteen, he gave a concert which attracted an audience of only one. Brilliantly the little fellow played for two hours, but not the slightest applause was forthcoming. Then he stopped and addressed his audience politely, asking if his playing did not deserve a little encouragement. The dilettante leaned forward to catch the words addressed to him, and the young pianist was stupefied to find that his only listener was as deaf as a post! This singular person used to frequent the concerts to conceal his infirmity.

Nor does this exhaust the tale of Rubinstein's troubles. In Vienna, whither as a youth of seventeen he had gone to make his way in the world, he lived in a garret, and gave lessons for so little that he was often in the direst need of bread. He had brought with him a dozen letters of introduction to prominent people from the Russian ambassador and his wife in Berlin. He made his calls and left a number of his letters, then waited for replies and invitations. None came. After five or six letters had met this response of absolute silence, he resolved to find the reason, and so opened one of the missives. And this was what he read: 'MY DEAR COUNTESS—To the position which we occupy is attached the tedious duty of patronising and recommending our various compatriots, in order to satisfy their oftentimes clamorous requests. We therefore recommend to you the bearer of this, one Rubinstein.' The riddle was solved, and Rubinstein was still in want of bread. Liszt was in Vienna at the time. In Paris, some years before, he had heard the youthful prodigy give a recital, had kissed him, and proclaimed him 'the heir of my playing.' Now he invited him to dinner. 'It was a most welcome invitation,' said Rubinstein in after years, 'since the pangs of hunger had been gnawing me for several days. I cannot tell you,' he added, 'what I went through, but such is the fate of an artist: he must suffer to be anything.'

Rubinstein was in Berlin when the Revolution of 1848 broke out, and it became necessary for him to return to Moscow. He had, of course, to cross the Russian frontier, and, not knowing that a pass was necessary, he did not provide himself with one. He carried a huge trunkful of musical manuscripts with him, but the frontier police did not understand his hieroglyphics, and confiscated the papers as seditious matter! Expostulation and entreaty proved alike unavailing. The police declined to believe the supposed revolutionist, and although, by playing the piano, he convinced them that he was a musician, they sent him to prison all the same. It was found afterwards that the precious manuscripts had been sold to various greengrocers and buttermen!

Rubinstein was a great traveller. There was scarcely a country on the face of the globe that he had not visited, and scarcely an important city that he had not played in. His single visit to America in 1872 was perhaps the most fruitful of incident. In Boston his very clothes were rent by enthusiastic admirers in search of souvenirs. Women rushed on the platform and embraced him, and the entire audience literally yelled: 'Come back again! come back again!' In New York he made a tremendous sensation. One evening somebody brought to him on the platform a silver wreath on a white satin cushion, but he only looked cynically at the gift, and gave his leonine head a meaning shake. He was, however, very 'cranky' on this American tour. To begin with, he did not like the people calling his recitals 'shows.' 'Just as if my concerts were menageries,' he would say indignantly. Then he was disgusted with the huge poster portraits of himself which stared at him from every hoarding and from every shop window. It was not solely because they were bad portraits, but because he disliked being looked upon as a curiosity or a phenomenon. One consolation, however, came to him. In his travels out West he arrived at a place where Henry Ward Beecher was announced to lecture, and when he saw the preacher's portraits he cheered up immensely: they were far worse than his own! It was in New York that a recital almost failed because some one had dared to put side by side with one of his solos in the programme a couple of Strauss waltzes. That was enough. Rubinstein sat down calmly, and absolutely refused to play. The manager—it was just before the concert—implored, argued, entreated, threatened. It was of no avail. Only when a staff of ready assistants had with pen and ink scored out of the programme the offending items, only then did Rubinstein consent to play. After the recital, he said gravely to the director: 'I never regretted so much being a poor man. Had I had the money, I would have paid you the forty thousand dollars forfeit, and gone straight back to Europe.' And all on account of poor Strauss! On this tour, Rubinstein gave two hundred concerts at the rate of forty pounds per concert; twenty years later, the terms he demanded were a hundred and fifty pounds per concert.

When in a good humour, Rubinstein was the most genial fellow imaginable; when in a bad humour, he was simply a fiend. He was disappointed at not being recognised as a composer, and his disappointment led to frequent fits of brooding melancholy. Then he would sit smoking his cigarette, and reply only in monosyllables, with his eyes half closed. He was in such a mood one night in the house of the late Mr T. L. Stillie, the Glasgow musical critic. Midnight had long passed, and Rubinstein still remained in his armchair smoking his cigarette. At last Mr Stillie ventured to ask: 'Do you like Beethoven?' Rubinstein took another whiff, and answered quietly: 'Beethoven is good.' After a silence of half an hour, the host asked: 'Do you like Wagner?' Rubinstein, throwing his cigarette away, replied: 'Wagner is not good.' Another half-hour passed, and Stillie, having exhausted his series of questions, proposed to retire. 'Don't go,' said Rubinstein; 'I like your conversation very much!' And they remained together till three o'clock in the morning without saying anything more than 'Good-night' when they parted.

When he was in such a mood as this, it went pretty hard with Rubinstein's pupils, especially if the student were stupid or stubborn. He has been known to send a young fellow spinning on the floor when he replaced him on the piano stool; and his sarcasm on other occasions would make a man ill for days together. 'Do you hear that note?' he would thunder, as he showed how the tone should be produced. 'That note is worth your whole life—and more.' But he could be kind and gentle too. On one occasion when he heard that an English lady, a perfect stranger to him, had not been able through ill-health to attend his recital, he went to her house next morning and played for her the whole programme. He was a devoted admirer of the fair sex, and was never happier than when paying compliments to a pretty woman. When he was in London the Princess of Wales sent for him, and he met her with the naïve remark that he was delighted to see her looking so lovely. More than that, he proceeded to kiss her hand, and when the Princess withdrew, saying hastily it was not the custom in England, Rubinstein replied blandly, 'With us, it is the law.' Under the spell of his genius hundreds of women threw themselves in his path. 'It is quite strange,' he would say, 'but I love them all, even tenderly, though they do not believe it.' It was absolute torture to him to know that a woman who had once loved him could forsake him for another, and this 'not because I care for the woman, but because I am an egotist.' Of the mental powers of the sex, he had no exalted opinion. Women, he said, go a certain length, defined and definable, and beyond this they never get; but, he added, 'they are adorable, and if deprived of their society, I would hang myself.'

As to Rubinstein's playing, what shall be said? His virtuosity was unique to such an extent, that there was truth even in the remark of the humorist that Rubinstein's wrong notes were better than the right notes of others. There were no difficulties for his fingers: he even invented difficulties hitherto unheard of, for the mere pleasure of conquering them. And his kinds of 'touch' were so varied! He occasionally showed such strength of finger that people would look under the piano to see whether he had not smashed through the keyboard. It was as if he thrashed the piano as an hereditary foe with whom he had to settle an account of long standing. Many an instrument broke down under the trial. Yet Rubinstein could play as delicately and as sweetly as Chopin himself, and if he were accompanying a vocalist, it was sometimes difficult to tell whether the piano or the vocalist was doing the singing. This combination of 'touches' was the more remarkable considering the physical aspect of his fingers, which were short, thick, and blunt, affording no promise of pliancy or of feathery lightness, but rather the reverse. But Rubinstein himself could give the explanation, and if he did give it, it was in the words of the Greek saying: 'The gods sell to us all good things for labour.'

Twenty years have elapsed since Hans von Bülow first appeared in this country, and the younger generation cannot, of course, remember the extraordinary impression he created among a public accustomed solely to a school of playing remarkable for entire absence of original thought and variety of expression. But the number of eminent pianists who crowded on Bülow's heels lessened greatly the excitement produced by his earlier appearances, and in later years he came to be known better for his eccentricities than for his achievements as an artist. When a pianist told his admirers that he preferred beefsteaks to bouquets, it was more likely that they should remember the saying than the particular way in which he rendered a Beethoven sonata. The Bülow anecdote has in truth become a trifle doubtful in these days, for all the floating musical wit of the time is being fathered upon the eminent pianist. Still, there is a sufficient body of authentic story to serve the wants of the most voracious *raconteur*. There was indeed seldom a concert or a recital of Bülow's from which one might not carry away some amusing reminiscence. In Berlin he was once conducting one of Beethoven's concertos. In the pause before the Dead March, which constitutes the second movement, Bülow, in deference to the funeral music, was seen rapidly to take off his ordinary white gloves and substitute a pair of faultless black kids, which disappeared again as soon as the Dead March was played. He had a fondness for this kind of display. In Berlin, while he was engaged as conductor at one of the opera-houses, the management decided to produce an operetta which he regarded as worthless, and therefore declined to conduct. While the work was being performed, Bülow sat in one of the boxes close to the orchestra, attired in a mourning hat with long black streamers, a lemon and white handkerchief in his hand, according to the German custom at funerals. The whimsicality was presently explained when Bülow confided to one of his friends that the operetta was being buried, and that Herr von Bülow now attended at the obsequies!

While conducting, he was perfectly free and easy, and he would think nothing of stopping to address the audience, or to admonish a lady who persisted in waving her fan out of time with the music. Not long before his death he was conducting a concert in Berlin, when he took it into his head to make a speech about Bismarck, at the close of which he called upon the audience and the band for a 'Hoch.' The audience obliged him with a cheer; but the band did not see the fun of the thing, and remained stoically silent. This was too much for Bülow, who stepped in front of the audience, deliberately took a handkerchief from his pocket, wiped the dust from his shoes, and walked majestically off the platform.

Bülow was magnetically attracted by satirical souls. When he asked a Vienna friend, 'How do you like the pianist B——?' and received the reply, 'He possesses a technique which overcomes everything easy with the utmost difficulty,' he exclaimed with peals of laughter, 'That's the sort of talk I like.' And that was the sort of talk he indulged in himself. Midway in the seventies, when he conducted in Glasgow, the local musicians and friends of the art gave him a grand banquet. Towards the end of the evening, when everybody was in high spirits, Bülow rose, and in the coolest possible manner administered the following damper: 'Gentlemen, I have the greatest admiration for your concerts and all your musical conductors. I only regret to say that they resemble too much the omnibus conductors. You ask why? Because they are always behind—omnibus conductors behind on the vehicle, musical conductors behind in time.' Nor did he spare even his friends when he was in the sarcastic mood. On a certain occasion he was conducting a concert in Hamburg, and one of the pieces to be performed was Rubinstein's *Ocean* Symphony. What did he do? He sniffed at the score, turned it upside down on the desk, and then throwing it aside, said, 'To conduct music like this, one must have long hair; I have not got it.' This story, by the way, was told to Rubinstein shortly after, and he at once wrote to Bülow. 'I wrote him,' he says, 'that his opinions were never the same two days running, and inasmuch as that which he abused to-day he praised to-morrow, there was still hope for my poor music. Also, if he had taken the trouble to measure my hair, I regretted not having had leisure to measure his ears.'

Agreeable and polite as a rule, Bülow had one rather disconcerting peculiarity, when he met any one to whom for any reason he felt a repugnance. He never noticed the individual, but got away as quickly as he could. At Copenhagen a 'cellist was introduced to him with a possible view to an engagement. The poor man was not only possessed of great artistic talent, but also of an enormous nose. Bülow stared at him for a moment, and then rushed away with the remark: 'No, no! this nose is impossible.' Tenor singers as a body he did not like, probably because of their affectations, and it was this antipathy that led to his witticism that the tenor is not a man, but a disease. He was extremely fond of animals, and when resident in Berlin he very often spent his afternoons at the Zoological Gardens. He was a great circus-goer, but as likely as not he would go to sleep in the middle of the performance. Indeed, like Napoleon, he could sleep almost anywhere and at any time. The Director of the Opera at Rotterdam once invited him to a performance of Nessler's *Rat-catcher of Hamelin*. At the close, when the musician naturally looked for a compliment, Bülow went on the stage, and with a gracious bow said, 'Dear Director, I owe you a most delightful evening: it is a long time since I had so fine a nap.' He was a great ladies' man, and would do anything in reason to please the sex. In society he was extremely agreeable, but he could not sit out long dinners, and would get up in the middle and retire with a cigarette. Both he and Rubinstein were tremendous smokers, but Rubinstein beat him hollow with something like seventy-five cigarettes a day.

THE VICAR OF WROCKSLEY.

By John Stafford.

He still lives at Wrocksley, though the cross in the churchyard says he died on a day years ago, and the villagers, who recall that day with head-shaking, say so too. But a life cannot be accounted dead which reverberates on in other lives as the old vicar's does; and the people of Wrocksley, looking into their hearts and seeing the gentle, white-haired presence there, feel that in his own way he lingers yet among them, and they are willing enough to have it so, remembering what he was. It is one of those afterglows which large natures often leave, by which those who knew them in their mortal shining may still find some light to live by. Yet it was hardly of the vicar's seeking, any more than the love was which made such aching, one autumn day, under bodice and vest at Wrocksley; and if indeed he craved anything at the last, more than other guerdon, it was the rest which God had brought him—that, and no more.

So said old Peter, the sexton, whose daughter, Hannah, had been the vicar's housekeeper; and in his walnut visage was the look of a man who knew all he was saying. Others, seeing it, and not sharing the things which his memory held, only shook their heads, thinking of the opinion he had that there were none so happy as those who rested so, and that there were no sleeping-places like those he dug with his own spade. For it was Peter's boast that he had bedded down the people of Wrocksley and covered them up comfortably for half a century or more, and that never a one of them had known ache or pain, or even the edge of a sorrow, unless it was Betty Griggle, who had left a stocking behind her, and was seen sometimes by fearsome folk in her roofless cottage, seeking it. But Peter's heart often pulled against his philosophy, which was a personal growth, born of much grave-digging; and when his thoughts get busy with other days, and he remembers the figure in them, his rheumy eyes take a softer look, and his regrets give a sigh to the breeze, for the vicar's sake, lie he never so still under the cedar-tree. And if Peter pauses in such moments by an old green wicket to gaze down a leafy vista, as if to a Past it led to, it is perhaps because he can recall better there the few happenings which make up our story—if so it may be called, which is little more than a reminiscence, scarce worth the reading, some might say—of an obscure country parson, who lived alone with a dead hope, and found it the best of company, so long as it was 'a sweet sorrow' merely, and not a burden more than a heart could carry.

It was an almost forgotten circumstance at Wrocksley, that years ago, not long after his induction to the living, the vicar and Miss Hawksley, of the manor-house, had been much together in parochial work; especially during the dark, epidemic time, which had kept Peter so busy, and which, towards its close, almost proved fatal to Miss Hawksley herself. But it was towards her recovery, before health had done all its duty, and when the arm of another was still good to lean on, that she and the vicar would be seen oftenest in company, either in the manor-house garden, or in the long lime avenue which led from it to the wicket by the church. If the trees therein could be made to talk, like those which Dante saw, they might repeat what they heard and saw then of word or glance or subtle play of feature. But because of his mature years, and his uniform kindness to all in his flock, the vicar's name was never seriously linked with that of the young girl; and if the parish had any suspicion at all of a more than pastorly interest in her, they were quite allayed some time later, when at St George's, Hanover Square, Joan Hawksley was made one with that dashing young officer, the Hon. Mr Delmar. For, whatever the effort cost him, it was the vicar who smilingly ordered the ringers to their bells; who with beaming face umpired the sports on the village green; and who laughingly helped old Peter home, when over-much toasting had unsettled his outlook. And when, after the honeymoon, the young people came to Wrocksley for a farewell day or two, before sailing for India, it was the vicar who gave them a welcome beside which Mr Hawksley's was tepid, not to say sullen.

That it should be so, made some wonderment for gossip to play with; for the old yeoman had gone up for the wedding in the blithest of humours, leaving money for the sports, and a dinner at the 'Crown,' with a barrel or two of beer thrown in to give it a Bacchic flow. And now he who had seemed as jovial then as any Silenus, was walking up and down his acres, a moody, haggard man. But the busy tongues soon had the truth to wag with. Mr Hawksley was found one morning a few weeks later lying still in his room, with a pistol in his hand, and wide-open eyes which never winked. It was his way of escaping from the two men in possession. In no long time afterwards the manor-house and all in and about it were brought to the hammer. Instead of a rich man, the beautiful Miss Hawksley had wedded a penniless younger son. Perhaps only the vicar knew that she had not even married for love, but only for her father's sake, to avert this ruin.

A shadow grew to his face, and he became for a time fonder of his retirement than had been his wont. He walked a deal in his garden, as if, like Plato, he could think better there; and sometimes, after sundown, he would cross over from the vicarage and pass through the green wicket to the avenue beyond. He would re-appear in an hour or so, but with paler face, as he paused to look up at the stars, as if wondering at their happy twinkling with that churchyard beneath them and such ruth as his. It was at some such moment, perhaps, that into his darkness certain fireflies of thought came dancing, like runaway stars themselves, to show him a path through the slough. Wrocksley was already recovering itself. The Saturday night hilarity at the 'Crown' had become less of a sputter; timorous people had ceased to avoid the manor-house; Peter had resumed his humming as he made his beds, or mowed neatness to the grassy places; and now, as the harvest was gathered in, and all saw how rich and good it was, cheerfulness ruled the days, and soon the cheeriest of all was the vicar.

From that time, as if impelled by some inward need for a life of wider relation, he became ceaselessly active in the parish; but always with such tact and delicacy, such tenderness and affection for those both in and out of his flock—for there were some few dissenters at Wrocksley—that the people's regard for him became a sort of communal possession, a joint warming of hearts, felt rather than understood, as they felt the sunbeams without recking of heat-waves. It was not all done at once, nor did Wrocksley ever become, in the years that followed, an ideal village, where no sinning was, or naughtiness of nature. The vicar knew his parish, knew it to be a very human little place, just as he was human, and no better to his own judging than any man of them all, who did his duty, and kept as good as he might, being a son of Adam and no angel.

Yet withal the vicar lived a very lonely life—as lonely as any shepherd on the hillsides, whose flock is his only care, and who is glad to pipe for company, when all was safe, and no lambs were in the pits, or poor ewes in the waters of affliction. The vicar's pipes were the organ-pipes, and young Caleb, the son of Peter, earned odd pennies by blowing breath to them, while the player's long fingers moved lovingly about the worn yellow keys, filling the church with a faint atmosphere of music, which the roosting rooks could barely hear as they swayed overhead in the night wind.

On one such evening, when the sun was behind the hills, and the mists were gray by the river, Peter stood at the bottom of his garden, smoking his pipe, and looking across his dormitory with eyes which had past days in them. The church door was ajar, and slow-moving melodies floated over to the listener, gliding from one key to another in a major and minor chain, as if the vicar were telling musical beads. Peter knew those airs, and whose name it was on the front of the tattered book the player had before him; but it was only rarely he heard them, and now, as he pulled at his shag, old faces shaped in the wreaths of it, and he was living again in times past, with a gentle puffing at the sight of them.

Then, all at once, he saw his own churchyard again, and it was not an idle gaze. A dark figure had just glided in from the lich-gate, and was crouching now over by the palm cross, and Peter was watching her steadily, his heart working faster than usual. She remained quite still; but he could hear something athwart the melodying which made him put his pipe away and look as if he had never heard such a sound a thousand times before.

He went slowly up to her, but she did not hear him, though she had ceased weeping and was listening to the organ, her black veil raised, so that her face was dimly visible. A white, wasted profile was all that he could see, but Peter knew it well. She looked up half dazedly at the sound of her name; then faintly smiling, she caught his hand and kept it while she rose to her feet and made a motion to the church door. Peter, feeling the hint of it, led her thence, and they entered and stood a moment looking up at the gray head of the vicar, who, deep in an *Ave Verum*, played on in his little island of light, unconscious of everything. Peter felt his arm clutched tighter, and a pull back into the shadow of the doorway, where the trembling woman fell on the old fellow's shoulder to weep anew. But starting up suddenly, she almost dragged him away, away to the gate, into the lane, and on to his cottage, into which he had to assist her, so weak was she grown and helpless.

The old organ, as if in a reverie of half-forgotten days, when it floated to the touch of maiden fingers, discoursed a sweetness which it seldom gave to the coarser promptings of man. The saintly figures in the windows seemed to awake and to listen in quaint attitudes; the Virgin gazed more tenderly on her child; the centurion's visage softened as he looked on the kneeling woman; a benigner peace was in the face of the dead Christ. It was but the moon, slow-rising and shining softly through the many-hued figures; and presently the player, seeing his shadow grow to the music-page, lifted his hands from the keys, and the organ, heaving a sigh from its leathern lungs, went back to its sleep.

The vicar descended from the loft with the look of a man who had been dreaming a dream, and was still holding on by the fringe of it. But seeing the boy-face beside him, he smiled, and felt in his pocket for the expected coin, talking, the while, of the lad's pet jackdaw, and of another one of Rheims, which he tells of as they walk together to the lichgate.

A few hours more, and Wrocksley is asleep under the moon, seeming in the yellow sheen only a shadow-village, shaped there from the mists which rest about it. But soon the dawn comes, and its cockcrows ring out, and it rouses grumblingly, yawning, and eye-rubbing into fuller wakefulness. Then it goes forth into the dewy lanes and fields, while the sun mounts higher, drinking up the mist and drying the tears of opening flower-eyes, till all is warm and lovable and fair to see, for it is autumn time, and lush with growth in garden and field. Therefore every one is easy-humoured and cheerful in greeting generally; and it seems ill-fitting that Peter should be so gruff in his rejoinders and heavy of aspect, as he makes his way to the vicar's orchard, scythe in hand. But so he is all day. He cuts his way between the trees, pausing here and there to whet his curved blade, with sometimes an anxious look across to his cottage, and then at the vicarage near him, as thought leaped from one to the other. And when, by-and-by, Hannah brings him a jug of cider, and lingers plying questions, he turns on her almost angrily.

'Never yo' mind, lass, who her be; nor why her came in the manner her did, an' with such sickness on her. Keep yer teeth tight; an' if vicar tells yer it's a fine day, or the like o' that, say, "Yes, it is," an' let him go his way. D'ye hear, Hannah? D'ye hear?'

Hannah hears, but with eyes half frightened, and goes back with her jug, fuller of questions than ever.

So the day wears on; the sun nears the hills, and sets them all ablaze; then the fire dies sullen, and grayness comes and darkness, followed soon by a new dawn eastwards, where the moon mounts in the silence to look again at Wrocksley. It is so still that the vicar's pen creaks like a tortured thing as it travels along, leaving brave words behind it. It is harvest time, and the vicar likes the subject. His lamp yellows as the white light comes stronger from the garden; but pursuing his way he comes to an end at last, and is looking through the sermon, adding neater touches and rounding doubtful periods, when he glances up with a start. A shadow has crossed the papers. It is Peter at the open window, hat in hand.

'Sir, I'——

'Come in, man,' says the vicar heartily. 'You quite startled me.—Is Hannah asleep again?'

'Not as I know of, sir. I came in through the side gate, an'—an' seeing yer in here, I made bold'——

'It is no intrusion, Peter. I have just finished my writing, and am glad to see you. —Anything wrong?'

Peter turns his hat round nervously, looks at the vicar, then out into the garden.

'It's a case o' sickness, sir—a lady as maybe yo'll remember. Her's at my cottage now—Major Delmar's widow, sir.'

Peter shuffles a foot, staring harder than ever at the moonlight.

'Her's bin ailing some time, it seems—ever since she lost her son. He were washed overboard in a storm they had, an' her's never got over the shock it give her. She came back here o' Thursday, an' I saw her, an' she arsked me to let her rest awhile. But she got worse, an' I sent for Dr Turrell o' Bilchester. He's just bin again—maybe yo' heard the gig, sir —an' he's given her a draught. Her's asleep now, but that weak, sir, her poor breath would scarce move a candle flame. Her arsked me not to tell yer, but she's hardly bin sensible since, an' I think it right you should know, sir, as an old—an old parishioner is back again among us.'

Still Peter looks away, torturing his hat. He can only hear laboured breathing, then a voice which he has never heard before.

'I will go with you to her.'

But the vicar trembles into the chair again; and Peter has to pour out a little wine from a decanter and offer it to him.

'Thank you, Peter. A touch of faintness. This heat is so trying. I am better now. Give me your arm. Ah, now we are right. Not so young as I was, Peter.—Mrs Delmar, you say? And she is back at Wrocksley? —This way, Peter; this way.'

They go out by the hall, where the vicar reaches for his wideawake, telling Hannah to go to bed if she likes, but to leave the side door on the latch. He is stronger now, and dispenses with Peter's assistance as he walks to the cottage.

. . . . .

Hour after hour the vicar watched, on his knees most of the time, but always with his eyes to the face on the pillow, which is so white among the dark masses of hair, and as still almost as a dead face. Prue, Peter's eldest daughter, dozed fitfully the while in an adjoining room, with little starts now and again, and a sleepy lifting of eyelids, lest she should go off altogether, and so lose hold of duty. But Prue grew heavier, for it had been ironing day, and the sun had been hot as well as the fire, and she had much enjoyed her supper; so that, by-and-by, her head forgot its nodding, and Prue was soundly sleeping.

Her sense of hearing was the first to awake—or seemed to be; for she is not sure now whether the low voices speaking were mere dream-things only, or actual sounds which reached her. But what the few detached words were she would never say; and when Peter first questioned her, and saw the purport of her look, he stooped and kissed her—a rare thing for him to do—and said, 'Right, lass! don't tell even me.' But while the words were still fresh in her brain, and she was standing with a flush half of shame at having yielded so to the comfort of the elbow-chair, she seemed struck by the silence about her, and wondering at it, made her way softly to the other room. She beheld the risen sun shining full on the face of the patient. It was quite still, and the half-shut eyes were glazing under their lashes. One arm was stretched out, showing some of its white roundness, and the hand was in those of the vicar's, as he knelt with his forehead against it, silent and without motion. Prue was turning to go, feeling that was not a sight for her, when he looked up and saw her. He rose to his feet straightway, appearing calm, and his voice was as usual as he crossed the limp hands, remarking that the end had come a few minutes ago, and that she might now shut out the sun. There was no dejection in his face; only a strange light in his eyes, as when sorrow and gladness burn together and are one.

That light was shining still, when three days later he conducted the body to the grave, and stood there in the sunbeams reading the office of the dead; and Peter, seeing it, as he stood, spade in hand, apart from the people, looked down to his clayey boots; but failing to see them, cleared his throat and cuffed Caleb's ear for standing there with his hands in his pockets.

But the vicar was never the same after that; indeed he weakened so that he was ordered a long rest; and for a time Wrocksley was in charge of a *locum tenens*. In the following January the vicar returned, apparently strong again, and for some months appeared to be quite his old self. Towards September, however, he fell away again. His nights became increasingly restless, and Hannah's cookery of lessening account, which seemed to hurt her. She ran over to her home one evening to talk distressedly of it with her father. But Peter said nothing—only turned to Prue, and asked the date of the newspaper beside her. She told him, and he smoked on as before; till Prue said suddenly: 'Why, this is the day Mrs Delmar died, father!'

'So it is, wench,' said Peter; 'an' I put her to rest a year ago come Tuesday.'

There was more talk between Hannah and Prue; then good-nights, and a mounting of lights to upper windows, which presently darkened again.

Before long there is only one light shining in Wrocksley, and that is from the vicar's bedroom. The moon, creeping higher, can see it beaming steadily hour after hour, like a great yellow eye glaring on to the churchyard. It is as if it saw something there, and cannot look away. The moon hides her face, and a low moaning comes from the trees. The eye glares fiercer in the new darkness, till the cloud has sailed on and the moon peers out again. The dawn comes, and the sun, and long shafts of light shine from between the trees on grinning gargoyle and mullioned window—shifting sun-patches fretted with leaves. But one beam shines full on the figure that lies there in sight of the vicarage window, and the dewdrops glint in the gray hair like gems that have fallen on it. With his face to the ground, and his hands tightly clenching the grass, the vicar lies on, caring nothing for the sunbeam. A robin, perching on the headstone, sings greeting to him; but he pays no heed. An old man stumbles across from the gate and kneels by him, calling his name. There is no answer; and still calling, he turns the face upwards. But the wet features never change, and the pale lips have no word for him. Then Peter stands up and bares his old head.

He was fast asleep, was the Vicar of Wrocksley.

OUR SIMIAN COUSINS.

The differences separating men from simians are happily wide and apparent to everybody; as for the similarities that likewise exist, they are not quite so obvious, and it may be interesting to point out some of the most remarkable of them.

That human beings should be largely covered with short fine hairs which serve no apparent purpose is worth noting in the first place, and it is especially worthy of observation that, as amongst simians, these filaments grow upwards on the forearm and downwards above the elbow. This arrangement of hair on the arms serves with our 'poor relations' a useful purpose, for, crouching on a thick bough, after the manner of their kind, and holding on to another branch at a convenient height, it allows the rain to drain off from their hands and shoulders at their elbow joints, and thus, in a measure, protects them from cold, to which they are highly susceptible.

Like men, the larger apes have no tails, and if they have not lost them, as Lord Monboddo argued that men had lost theirs, namely, by sitting on them, they have at any rate worn away part of their hairy covering by reclining at the base of trees, rendering visible a black and glossy skin like that of a negro's.

The gorilla walks in a semi-upright position, knees very much bent, using its long arms as crutches. It does not, however, lay the palms of its hands on the ground, as to do so would bring it too much forward on all-fours, but its second finger-joints instead—a habit which has denuded those joints of hair. Now, here comes in a striking coincidence, for, if one holds up the back of his hand to the light, it will be observed that the fine hairs dispersed elsewhere over it are entirely absent from the place indicated.

It is manifest, according to the theory of descent, that the closest resemblances between men and monkeys should occur between the lower races of the former and the highest of the latter, and that this is the fact is certainly indubitable. The negro's profile—his protuberant jaws, retreating forehead, and flat nose—is strangely like that of the ape's. His projecting ears, length of arm, shortness of neck, thickness and shape of skull, lightness and conformation of brain, &c., all point in the same direction. Similarly to apes, the lower races of mankind are unable to oppose their thumbs and forefingers with any effect. A writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* tells us how he tested a Bushman in this matter. 'Pinch my finger,' he told him—'pinch much harder,' he urged; but the pressure 'would not have injured a fly.'

Polynesians, Malays, and other inferior races make use of their outstretched great toes in climbing trees, after the manner of monkeys. Children, likewise, can take a strong grip with the great toe, and if a spoon be inserted, they can hold it as firmly with the foot as with the hand.

The arms of monkeys are long and strong, to facilitate their movements in trees; and when the females would escape from their numerous forest foes, they are compelled to use both hands, and thus the young ones must save themselves by clinging to their mothers as best they can. It has been shown by Dr Louis Robinson that in newly-born children this development of arm and strength of grip is absolutely amazing. 'I have now records of upwards of sixty cases,' he states, 'in which the children were under a month old, and in at least half of these the experiment was tried within an hour of birth. In every instance, with only two exceptions, the child was able to hang on to the finger or a small stick by its hands, like an acrobat from a horizontal bar, and sustain the whole weight of its body for at least ten seconds. In twelve cases, in infants under an hour old, half a minute passed before the grasp relaxed; and in three or four, nearly a minute. In order to satisfy some sceptical friends, I had a series of photographs taken of infants clinging to a finger or to a walking-stick. Invariably the thighs are bent nearly at right angles to the body, and in no case did the lower limbs hang down and take the attitude of the erect position. This attitude, and the disproportionately large development of the arms compared with the legs, gave the photographs a striking resemblance to a well-known picture of the celebrated chimpanzee in the Zoo.' This disproportionate strength of arm, which appears to have come down as a kind of relic of days spent in primeval woods, seems, like other of the facts alluded to, only explicable on the theory of descent.

The way children first walk with their toes pointed inwards has also been observed to be peculiarly monkey-like. Fortunately, as they acquire more the special characteristics of their own race, they outgrow many ways and tricks which render their appellation of 'little monkeys' rather appropriate.

When a monkey has achieved some mischievous trick, the manner it draws back the corners of its mouth and wrinkles its eyelids resembles a human smile very closely; and its habit in alarm of rapidly raising and lowering its eyebrows and forehead may be noticed in a minor degree in some men when much excited. Raising the eyebrows, opening wide the eyes, and showing more or less of the whites, is to be observed as a vestige of this habit in nearly every one when startled or surprised, but perhaps more in women than in men. The pout of the lips in impotent displeasure, as occasionally seen on the faces of children, and even of women—heroines of novels, for instance, are at times described with 'a pout' on their 'pretty lips'—is quite common amongst simians. In Darwin's *Expression of the Emotions* there is a picture of a chimpanzee deprived of its fruit, on whose face a pout is amusingly prominent.

It has been asserted that, in using fire, man differs fundamentally from all the lower animals; but Emin Pasha reports having seen numbers of apes walking in single file, carrying torches, on a night expedition to rob an orchard. Besides man, only apes use implements. They break off branches for clubs, open oysters with stones, and hurl missiles of various kinds with great dexterity.

The deceased chimpanzee 'Sally' gave rise to much reflection by her intelligent ways. Without any difficulty or mistake, she would hand visitors, at their request, any stated number of straws up to at least ten, and, on occasions, she has been known by her keeper to count up to twenty. She knew right from left, would use a spoon, and sip with it until the cup was empty. Some savages there are who are unable to count above three; many cannot enumerate beyond the number of their fingers; and thus it will not be denied that her intelligence was, by comparison, most remarkable.

It was stated by a writer in the *Times* that the death of this ape was hastened by drink. Whether this be true or not, her partiality for alcoholic beverages was well known; and no secret was made of the fact that she was daily indulged with a pint of beer. This predilection for intoxicants constitutes another feature of resemblance between men and monkeys. Mr Muddock, the well-known writer of books of travel, mentions that he has known several simians who were all habitual drunkards, and that his own monkey, 'Baba,' drank itself into delirium tremens. Their love of music is another trait that must not be passed over. They will keep time to fine music by swinging their bodies to and fro and nodding their heads; while, if discordant notes be struck, they will show the most extraordinary excitement, and chatter fiercely.

It is amusing to notice that, even with respect to the habit of fainting, a weakness usually considered so peculiarly human, we are resembled by simians. Mrs Martin, in her entertaining work on South Africa, speaking of the apes of that region, draws the likeness with striking effect. 'Sarah,' an interesting young female baboon, was sometimes made the victim of rude practical jokes, one of which ended in the grotesque manner referred to. 'She dearly loved sweets,' says Mrs Martin, 'which were often given to her wrapped up in a multitude of papers, one inside the other. It was amusing to watch the patient and deliberate manner in which she would unfold each paper in turn, taking the greatest care never to tear one, and proceeding with all the caution of a good Mohammedan fearful of inadvertently injuring a portion of the Koran. This time, instead of the expected titbit, a dead night-adder was wrapped up and presented. When she unfolded the innermost paper, and the snake slipped out, with a horrid writhe, across her hand, Sarah quietly sank backwards and fainted away, her lips turning perfectly white. By dint of throwing water over her, chafing her hands, and bathing her lips with brandy, she was revived from her swoon, though not without some difficulty.' Truly an ape-like joke!

To a greater or lesser degree, most animals are able to express certain of their desires, feelings, and ideas, by various sounds and cries; but that this power approaches in simians to a kind of articulate speech was in 1892 set forth with much circumstantiality by Mr Garner. This gentleman subsequently went to study the ape language in the wilds of Africa, where, protected in a cage of patent construction, he professed to have been able, by means of phonographs, to acquire the original dialect in its native purity! But he seems not to have verified his claims by results.

Of the two gorillas 'Paul' and 'Virginia,' the Paris correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* remarks: 'It is impossible to look upon these strange caricatures of ourselves without being struck by the very slight structural difference which separates the two. When I entered the show, the young lady gorilla was munching an apple with every sign of satisfaction on her black face, which displayed at times a broad smile, just such as might be seen on many a human countenance of the same colour. Their shyness is very amusing, as they are not yet accustomed to being gazed at by hundreds of visitors. Virginia spends most of her time trying to conceal herself with wisps of straw, the result being that some of it sticks in her hair, giving her the appearance of a black Ophelia.'

The faculty of learning by imitation comes out in apes in a very human way. Dr Tylor mentions how the ape 'Mafuka,' of the Dresden Gardens, discovered the use of the key of her cage, which she would purloin, and hide under her arm; and how, on one occasion, seeing a carpenter at work using a bradawl, she seized the instrument and bored holes with it through the little table she had her meals on. 'The death of this ape,' says Dr Tylor, 'had an almost human pathos. When her friend the Director of the Gardens came to her, she put her arms round his neck, kissed him three times, and then lay down on her bed, and giving him her hand, fell into her last sleep.'

The social instinct is largely developed amongst simians, and they will defend their friends and families with the greatest self-devotion. Indeed, in a number of particulars, the lives led by savages are not at all unlike those led by the anthropoids. Certainly the mental organisation of apes is inferior in many important respects to that of even the lowest races of men; but Professor Huxley states that the difference between the highest apes and men is not wider than between the highest and lowest among the anthropoids.

THE SANDS OF TIME.

I.

When the leaves are whispering damp and dead
To the plash of the falling rain,
When the swallows have twittered good-bye and fled
Till Summer-time comes again,
Shall I think as I shut the old year out
Of what is to come in the new,
Or leave the future in shadow and doubt
To dream of the past with you?

II.

Do you remember an April day,
The sun on the springing corn,
And the trees a-tint with the promise of May,
Do you hear the far-off horn?
Last Summer's leaves crackled under our feet,
Or wind-tossed round us flew—
And now 'tis only in memory sweet
That I tread through the woods with you.

III.

Do you remember the hot July?
All nature gasped for breath,
While the faithless wind had forgotten to sigh,
And flower-birth led but to death.
We stood in the shade by the little gate,
Together, dear, I and you,
And we heard the blackbird call to his mate
When the roses cried out for the dew.

IV.

Do you remember a favourite horse,
A soft, warm nose in your hand?
The silence that came as a matter of course,
Or the speech that never was planned?
Do you remember—'tis months ago—
Or forget that you ever knew?
Dear, if I know as I think I know,
I know I am one with you.

V.

Do you remember the clear, cold night,
The night that our farewell sped?
You stood out dark 'gainst a streaming light,
'Take care of yourself!' you said.
All over. And yet though Summer be flown,
Its glories all lost to view,
I can never be heart-sick and never alone
When I travel the past with you.

B. M. Danby.

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A SCOTTISH AUBURN.

By P. Anderson Graham.

The modern tendency of population to mass itself in great towns and forsake the country districts, intensified as it has been during the last few generations, offers one of the most difficult problems to the statesmen of our time. It is unnecessary to dwell on the figures, because the facts are undeniable, and a bulky literature has grown up round them. Any one who wishes to study the subject can hardly do better than begin with the *Journal* of the Statistical Society, before which it was fully discussed about two years ago. The movement is found to pervade the whole world, and Scotland is far from being an exception to the general rule. A glance at the Census Returns for 1891 will show this to be so. The compilers separate the population of each county into towns, villages, and 'rural groups.' In all but two—Stirling and Linlithgow—of the thirty-three counties, the rural groups show a decrease of population. It has been said that no purely London family exists past the third generation, unless reinforced by fresh blood from the provinces, and the statement is more or less applicable to all great towns. The gradual depopulation of the rural districts may be likened to the drying of a river's tributaries—a process that soon or late would destroy the main stream. In time the residue will not be able to produce that 'natural surplus' needed to reinforce industry.

But statistics read in the closet yield but a cold and abstract idea compared to what is gained from personal experience. My own inducement to look them up is probably that which has led many others to do the same. I was born on the Borders, and ever since the district was left for good, have returned to the neighbourhood whenever opportunity served. This produced a curious mixture of pleasure and pain. There is a peculiar delight in revisiting some ancient haunt. The braes whereon one went nutting and bird-nesting, the fields that have been so often rambled over, the burns in which trout were guddled, seem to extend a friendly and almost human welcome. And it was not here as in the London suburbs, where one year you pitch your tent in what seems a secluded and rustic corner, but in twelve months find the jerry-builder running up villas and shops all round. The country, which luckily has never become a special haunt of the tourist, has annually been growing wilder and greener. This is no mere fancy, but in a matter-of-fact way can be traced to a vast increase of grass-land, and a more picturesque (that is to say, more careless) style of farming. The very footpaths are overgrown with weeds, and a by-lane which at one time was constantly used is now covered with grass.

Population is gradually melting away from the neighbourhood. The mere lapse of time effects many changes saddening in themselves, yet inseparable from the course of human life. At every new visit one misses some of the old familiar faces. This very year three noted characters died all within a short period of each other. Had you asked the minister or any of his decent respectable elders about them, you would, in their lifetime, have heard them described as worthless ne'er-do-weels. One was nominally a tailor, but was celebrated mostly as a poacher and as a great hand at the leister in autumn, when sea-trout and salmon run up our little stream to spawn; the second was a notorious drunkard, of whom there was a legend that he lived three months on nothing but drink—nothing at all events but a single twopenny loaf; the third was noted as a bitter and spiteful village gossip, who kept green the memory of those disagreeable chapters which occur in the early life of many who settle down quietly and soberly afterwards. Little as there seems to regret in the closing of such careers, the village will never again be the same to eyes that had never seen it without their figures. And the little graveyard on the hill is constantly receiving new inmates, whose departure is a cause of more positive sorrow.

In an ordinary way the old die and the young take their places, the house is emptied and filled again; but this no longer happens in our village. That actual vacancies are left is a fact only too apparent. There are three churches, an Established, a Free, and a United Presbyterian. At one time, easily within living memory, two of these had quite large congregations, and the third a fair one, since the village, although not in itself large, is the centre of a wide agricultural district. I myself remember, when a boy, seeing the crowds come out on Sundays. But to-day there are not enough in all the three churches to fill one of them. A similar state of things has happened in the school. The teacher is one of the most popular men in the neighbourhood. When he came there about fifteen years ago, he got married and settled down, as was imagined, for life in an extremely good country school. No other institution of a similar kind has been started. He draws all the scholars from the places round about, just as he did before, and he is as successful with his pupils as ever. Yet the school is dwindling away. He can give no explanation except what is undoubtedly the true one—that 'the folk are no longer in the countryside.'

The disappearance of the houses amply confirms the tale. In Goldsmith's Auburn we see ruin going to work in its own picturesque style, and in the south-eastern counties of England the same thing is happening to-day. Moss and lichen creep over wall and roofing; the untended roses and honeysuckles form natural festoons about the doorway; poppies, marigolds, and other rank-growing flowers seed in the neglected garden, and give birth to hundreds of new plants that throng up among blueweed and thistle, whose seeds are blown from the adjacent fields—themselves in many cases abandoned to the coarse herbage and wild-flowers that Nature will produce when man is neglectful.

It is not like that in our Scottish Auburn. Those lines of Goldsmith could not be properly applied to it:

Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops thy mouldering wall.

Never at any time was it noted for picturesqueness. In Norfolk and Suffolk, in Wilts or Gloucester, some of the cottages, though inside scarcely fit for respectable pigs to live in, with their damp floors, walls lined with calico (or even old newspapers!), and low roofs, have an appearance that charms the heart of poet or painter, especially on summer evenings, when the old man and his wife—a veritable Baucis and Philemon—may be seen resting under 'the wavy bower' that rose and honeysuckle have woven round the porch. But at their best the cottages of our village, with bare walls rising up sheer from the road, unadorned by flower or creeper, and with the plain vegetable garden at the back, were unattractive and even forbidding to look at. Nor is decay permitted to add to such beauty as they possess. When a cottage has been tenantless for a few months, just long enough for the village boys, who are a wild pack, to break every pane of glass and smash everything breakable, the house is pulled down and the land tilled. It used to be an easy matter to let the gardens; but as more and more fell vacant, this became more difficult, and now it is usual for the hedges to be pulled down, and both garden and the land on which cottages were built are added to the adjacent fields. If any of the migrated families number a poet among their progeny, he will have excellent material for exercising his craft when, having become laurelled and famous, he returns to the scenes of infancy. We can well imagine how 'the finest feelings of his nature' will be outraged, and his eloquence stimulated by the spectacle of turnips growing or sheep grazing on the very spot where his mother rocked him in his first cradle. It is sad to contemplate the possibility of such a fate for the home of any famous man, yet not a year passes without another plot of ground, another hearth and home, falling back into agricultural land.

The very memory of such houses must in many cases be blotted out. In my childhood the village referred to would have been cruciform had the lines been straight. It consisted of one long continuous street, crossed at the top end by a row of about twenty houses. To-day only one of these is left, and it stands by itself—a field and some cabbage gardens taking up the space once occupied by the others. What was the main street is now broken up into a few isolated groups of houses, or single houses with gaps between. A gardener, rather more enterprising than his neighbours, is now growing strawberries where the old 'smiddy' used to be and the smith lived. The public-house, where many a wild scene was enacted on Saturday nights, when 'drouthy neibors, neibors met' in it, has now given place to a potato-field.

To the eye of a stranger the village looks neater and far pleasanter than it did a generation ago, because naturally the more dilapidated cottages were the first to go, and those left are not only the best, but prettily situated among the fields and gardens. It is only the old inhabitant whose eye beholds in it all the elements of ruin and desolation.

A talk with those that remain shows that the movement is likely to continue. The old may reconcile themselves to country life, but the eyes of the young are all turned to town. Partly, no doubt, this is due to the condition of agriculture. Wherever they can, farmers are changing arable into pasture, and less labour is required for flocks and herds than for cereal crops. The bands of female outworkers in their great sun-bonnets, toiling on the turnips or cornfields, are noticeably smaller than they used to be, and there are few farms on which the number of hinds has not been decreased. But only a very few of our villagers are directly engaged in agricultural work. Indirectly, however, they are dependent upon it. A notable man used to be wheelwright and carpenter for the neighbourhood. He and his sons had plenty of work at the various farms to which they went and returned in a spring-cart drawn by an old mule. This beast has long been dead, and was succeeded by a pony, still alive, though now in its thirtieth year. Its owner died at a ripe old age, leaving a flourishing business to his children. But so much new machinery has been invented and come into use, that their vocation is now practically extinct, and they depend as much on the land shrewdly acquired by their father as upon dwindling trade. They are a clever, peculiar family of four, all bachelors, whose house is kept by a maiden sister, and round whose kitchen-fire the politics of the day are discussed as keenly (and perhaps as wisely) as in a London club.

The condition of their affairs is typical of that of many others in the village. A universal complaint is that, although the place is eight miles from a railway station, the most important wants of the inhabitants are satisfied from town. No saddler has a shop in the village now, though one flourished in the olden times. The small shopkeepers and cobblers and tailors find it difficult to obtain a scanty livelihood, and are well aware that it would be foolish to depend on their sons doing so, and therefore encourage them to seek their fortunes elsewhere. And a way is paved for the cleverest of them to do so. During a recent stay I noticed a girl of twelve or thirteen diligently conning a book day after day as she 'herded the kye' in a 'loanin.' My private surmise was that she was deriving entertainment from some of those wretched weekly collections of scraps that have been carried into Arcadia, or, what could be no better, was deep in the perusal of that feminine counterpart of the penny dreadful—a cheap love-story. It was an agreeable surprise to find her working at the *De Bello Gallico*. She was, she told me, preparing to compete for a bursary her sister had held before her; and from the way her eyes glistened, it was easy to see that the great advantage connected with it in her estimation was that it would enable her to go to school at Edinburgh. But this is a very welcome kind of migration to town. Would that in all other departments of life there existed a machinery for selecting those most fitted to use their talents and follow out a useful career in the city! It is because the bad and the good, the fit and the unfit, are hurried along by the same torrent that the movement causes so much apprehension.

In the exodus from the country, those are often left behind whose talents should have a wider scope. A few days before encountering the maiden with the cow, I was sea-fishing in an open boat just outside of Poole harbour, off the rugged chalk cliffs of the Dorset coast. The sport was not lively, and naturally I got talking to the boatman, and among other things asked him if it was not rather dull during winter in the village where he lived. 'No,' he answered; 'he did not feel it much, because he was a great reader.' 'And what do you read?' I asked. 'Just one book,' he replied—'the Algebra.' From subsequent inquiry I learned that by self-teaching he had acquired a really competent knowledge of mathematics, passing into regions where the village schoolmaster could not look at him, and where the parson of the parish was fain to confess he had forgotten his way since he left Cambridge. Evidently the youth had a very fine talent, but for lack of guidance it is serving no purpose except that of helping him to pass away the long winter nights.

Had the village which has been described possessed a unique history, were its decay of a purely exceptional nature, its story would hardly have been worth telling. The main interest arises from the fact that similar changes are taking place all over the kingdom. Moreover, they spring from causes almost identical. Since first beginning to notice the alteration taking place here, I have wandered about a great deal in Rural Britain between the English Channel and the Pentland Firth, and it has always been interesting to ask not only if the same thing was happening, but if from similar causes. And even statistics have ceased to be dry and forbidding when read in the light gained by personal inquiry and experience.

Of course there are very great differences in the various localities. The 'Hodge' of say Essex or Cambridgeshire, with his comparatively poor physique, due to generations of low wages and bad feeding, his lack of ambition and love of slops and beer, is not comparable to the intelligent and robust hinds of Northumberland or Roxburghshire or the Lothians. Any one accustomed to make long walking tours in both countries will admit the truth of the following observation. In any purely agricultural district of Scotland you may travel from ten to fourteen miles without passing a single public-house (and indeed the disappearance of many ancient hostelries is a conspicuous feature of the last decade); but the poorest and most depressed portions of Essex and Suffolk are still liberally supplied with beer-houses. Grumble as Hodge will about being starved on nine or ten shillings a week, he lays himself open to the retort that he subsists, and has a surplus for ale. It is cheap, vile, and heady, and, one would think, doubly hurtful to those who are ill-nourished. Again, the surroundings are very unlike. The squire and parson, excellently as they may fulfil their duties in some respects, have a pauperising influence. Very characteristic was the comment of the rustic after listening to a fiery orator, who had promised the abolition of landlords and clergy: 'Then who will there be to gi' me my Christmas coals and blankets?' Against the minister and the laird no such charge can be fairly brought.

The charms of country life are fully appreciated only by those who resort to them at moments of leisure. Such as follow rural pursuits for a livelihood find them sordid, toilsome, and repugnant. This feeling has endured through all the centuries, but had to be repressed and held in check in earlier times when obstacles to removal were great and numerous. As soon as travelling was facilitated, and it became an easy matter to shift from one place to another, the long pent-up desire found expression in action. Thomas Carlyle, a very shrewd observer in his day, was quick to notice it during those periodical visits paid to his native Ecclefechan as long as he had strength enough for the purpose.

Evidence that this is a true explanation is afforded by the curious fact, which the writer has elsewhere been at some pains to prove by figures, that the migration is greatest, not from the districts suffering most from agricultural depression, but from those where the farm-servants are most comfortable. There has, for instance, been in proportion a larger exodus from North Northumberland than from Norfolk. In other words, it is not so much an outcome of distress as of enlightenment and ambition. Those determined to get on in the world are the first to leave.

Explain the matter as one may, however, it has a very grave bearing on the future of the country. Towns could not long exist did not they draw off the surplus population from the rural districts; but to reduce the number of inhabitants is to kill the goose that laid the golden egg. I at any rate am sufficiently old-fashioned to re-echo the sentiment of him who so sweetly sang the decay of that other Auburn:

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade—
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XXXIV.—FULL LIGHT.

Two months had passed—two busy months, during which old Hamber had seemed to reign in the principal's chair at Great George Street, for Wynyan was constantly at the works.

Then came one of those mornings which proves the truth of the old proverb, that it never rains but it pours.

Wynyan had been away for a week, utterly exhausted and glad to get down to the seaside for a rest. He had returned from St Leonard's by the first train and made his way to the office, where Hamber received him trembling with excitement, as he placed a large official-looking letter in the engineer's hands.

'Read that first, sir,' cried the old man. 'I should have telegraphed, only your letter this morning said you would be back. A proud day for us—for you, sir!' cried the old man. 'Thank Heaven I have lived to see it!'

'Yes,' said Wynyan gravely, as he doubled up the brief official document, and replaced it in its cover. 'Put this in a large envelope, Mr Hamber, and send it by Gibbs to Miss Dalton.'

'Yes, sir. It will be glorious news for her. Poor child! she has been so anxious. Time after time she has come to me at Minton Place, to ask how everything was going on. Do you know, Mr Wynyan, sir, that there have been moments when I could feel that poor Mr Dalton's spirit was in her. So quick, so business-like, so exact in taking the point of everything.—I'll send him directly.—But there is another letter, sir, not so pleasant.'

'Brant Dalton's hand,' said Wynyan, frowning. 'What does he say?'

'That I am to see Drummonds at once, and instruct them to telegraph to their agents at Rome for five hundred pounds to be placed to his credit there, and wire to him as soon as the business is done. Am I to do this, sir?'

'I have no authority, Hamber, one way or the other. Do as you have done before: see the lawyers about it, and let them and Miss Dalton decide. You had better see to these things at once. I am going to write a few letters, and I will stay till you return from the solicitors.'

'So very, very glad to see you back, my dear sir,' whispered the old man, and the weak tears were in his eyes as he spoke. But the next minute he was the busy, methodical manager, despatching the great document to South Audley Street prior to hurrying off to the legal advisers of the firm.

It was about six o'clock that evening, just as Wynyan had made up his mind to go to Harley Street and show the doctor how much better he was for the change taken by his advice. He had put on his hat, and was in the act of leaving his chambers, when a telegraph boy came up the stairs, and placed the familiar tinted envelope in his hands.

He tore it open, glanced through it, said huskily, 'No answer,' and stepped back into his room trembling, his pulses beating violently, and a dizzy sensation making everything for a few moments spin round.

He mastered the agitation and read the message again and again.

It was very brief.

'I am in great trouble and perplexity. Mr Longdon is here. Could you come at once.
R. DALTON.'

Wynyan's pulses began galloping again as he stepped out of his cab at South Audley Street; but once more he mastered his emotion and looked quite pale and calm as he was shown into the library, where Renée sat facing the window, in conversation with Robert Dalton's old legal adviser.

Wynyan saw her face as through a mist, and he was conscious of words passing in greeting; then, as he took a chair, he began to recover himself while the lawyer went on talking, and it seemed to him, as she sat there in her simple black, that her face looked thinner and more care-worn as she listened to the gray, hard, keen-looking old man.

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'Glad to see you looking so much better, Mr Wynyan,' said the lawyer. 'You seemed quite overdone last time, my dear sir. Too pale now, but stronger. My congratulations, sir, upon the way in which you have got us, sir—*us* out of a nasty scrape. Meant good business for our firm, Mr Wynyan, but I am very thankful that we did not get it.'

'Then Miss Dalton has shown you the letter from Whitehall?'

'Sent for me at once, sir, but I could not get here till half an hour ago.—And about that other business, Miss Dalton: I understand that you wish me to communicate our opinion to Mr Wynyan?'

'Certainly,' said Renée.

'Then it is this, Mr Wynyan: Mr Brant Dalton had five hundred pounds sent him about a month ago.'

'I beg pardon,' said Wynyan quickly. 'I have nothing whatever to do with Mr Dalton's affairs.'

'No, sir; but it is Miss Dalton's wish that you should hear this.'

'If you please, Mr Wynyan,' said Renée quietly.

He bowed, and the lawyer went on.

'Prior to that, Mr Brant Dalton drew one thousand pounds from the firm's bank, he having command of the cheque-book, three days before he started for the Continent; and upon Mr Hamber consulting me upon this point, just as I had had a communication from a Mr Levvinson respecting the abstraction of certain documents by the said Mr Brant Dalton—I say, upon Mr Hamber consulting me, I immediately saw Miss Dalton here and pointed out that it was her duty to send an order by me to the bank that Mr Brant Dalton's signature should be no longer honoured.—That was so, Miss Dalton?'

Renée bent her head gravely.

'But really, Miss Dalton, you are placing me in a very painful position,' said Wynyan.

'I beg you will hear this out,' she said earnestly, and there was an appealing look in her eyes that sent his blood throbbing once more through his veins, while his temples beat heavily.—'Please go on, Mr Longdon.'

'Then came a cheque drawn for five hundred pounds, which was returned to the bearer, and was followed by a furious letter, to which I advised that no answer should be given; but in opposition to my advice, Miss Dalton ordered that the sum asked for should be remitted to her cousin.'

Wynyan's eyes sought Renée's, and she was looking at him almost apologetically; but as she met his glance, she just bowed her head, and the lawyer went on.

'Now, sir, we come to a letter received this morning, in which, as if by right, Mr Brant Dalton makes a demand for another five hundred pounds. Upon this Miss Dalton very properly appeals to me as being thoroughly conversant with her late father's affairs, and I tell her that, though unquestioned, Mr Brant Dalton assumed the position of principal, he had no right whatever to do so. Miss Dalton naturally, in her grief, and as he was her near relative, and had been long connected with the firm, gladly left matters in his hands. But, sir, she is now fully aware that he was guilty of the gross piece of dishonesty which nearly wrecked the firm's credit; that he was bribed by this Mr Levvinson, acting as agent to the Deconcagua Government, and pocketed a very heavy sum of money for the theft.'

'Have you not said enough, Mr Longdon?' said Renée gently.

'No, my dear madam, not half; but if you wish, I will spare you these unpleasant details, and briefly say to Mr Wynyan here, that Miss Dalton is thoroughly aware of her cousin's baseness, and that though, perhaps, subject to my advice, she may make him some small allowance, she forbids him ever to set foot in the office again; and finally, sir, through me, she asks you to take over entirely the control of this great business, under some partnership arrangement, to be drawn up in her interest and yours by me.'

'No, sir; it is impossible,' said Wynyan, rising, with a feeling that he could not trust himself to stay.

'Excuse me, sir; that is too hasty a decision,' said the lawyer. 'Please remember that Robert Dalton was your friend; that Mr Hamber, with all the spirit, is too old a man to carry on this important concern; lastly, that Miss Dalton is placed in a position which I may call one of complete helplessness. As her adviser, sir, I ask you to take a couple of days to consider the matter over.—And now, my dear madam, I have only just time to catch my train—if you will excuse me.'

Renée rose, and the old man hurried to the door.

'Later than I thought,' he cried, glancing at his watch. 'In two days, Mr Wynyan, make an ap'——

'Pointment' was cut off by the swinging to of the library door, and directly after the front was heard to close loudly.

For a few moments no word was spoken. Wynyan dared not look at the beautiful appealing face gazing so earnestly in his. Then, with pride and determination getting the mastery, he said: 'Miss Dalton, I set myself to prove to you that I was not the scoundrel you thought, and that I have done. What you propose is impossible'——

Wynyan did not finish his sentence, for with a low moan, Renée cried:

'I'm sorry—I was half mad—and blind; can you not forgive me—— Paul!'

Again he saw as through a mist, but it was clear enough for this: two outstretched hands, two appealing eyes; and he was but a mortal, passionately loving man, as he caught her sobbing to his breast, to hold her tightly there, till she started from him as if it were some sin.

For a voice at the door suddenly seemed to ring out, though the words were only spoken in agitated tones.

'Renée, my child, you are verging, really, you know.'

And then the doctor spoke, for he, too, had somehow entered the room, as if on purpose to blow his nose with a triumphant, trombone-like blast.

'They've persuaded me to stay dinner, my boy. Of course you are staying too?'

The ladies were hurrying up-stairs, and there was no one to back up the doctor's words; but Paul Wynyan stayed.

THE END.

THE ANCIENT INCAS.

It is a strange but indubitable fact that it is possible for highly advanced refinement and a primitive type of barbarism to exist side by side, to support each other in a united polity. Such an anomaly is presented in the case of the ancient Incas of Peru, the race dominant in Peru when Europeans first found their way thither. The word Inca, or Ynca, was also specially the title of the monarch, and it would appear of certain princes.

The early history of the Incas or ancient Peruvians is shrouded in oblivion. At the time of the Spanish conquest, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, their empire extended from about the second degree north to the thirty-seventh degree of south latitude, embracing the modern republics of Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chili. It was never specially suitable for agriculture and communication; but the industry and genius of the natives overcame all impediments. The coast in the main is a series of sandy deserts: the Sierra or region of the Andes contains stupendous chains of mountains, elevated plains, and table-lands, interspersed with warm and fertile valleys and ravines. The people who inhabited it were of rather less than the average height, of a light copper colour, highly civilised, industrious, and of a very contented disposition. They were numerous, and warlike, so far as acquiring neighbouring lands and bringing the people under their sway was concerned. In these characteristics they present a marked contrast to their equally civilised but yet unknown neighbours the Aztecs, in the north, and the Patagonians in the south. The Aztecs were diminutive, almost sufficiently so to earn the name of pygmies; whilst they were most pugilistically inclined, fighting and conquering for the love of war. The Patagonians, on the other hand, were savages in every way, and of immense stature.

The capital of the empire was Cuzco, situated high up among the Cordilleras, but yet enjoying a salubrious climate, owing to its situation in the tropics. According to the tradition of the Incas, this was the spot at which their empire began. It was, as the word Cuzco signifies, the navel of the country. The city was well fortified, naturally and artificially, by a strong fortress on the north, and a spur of the Cordilleras on the east. The city was connected with the four divisions of the empire by four great roads, constructed for military purposes, to enable large bodies of troops to be moved expeditiously from one place to another. These roads are marvels of scientific workmanship, and the remains which to-day may be seen attest their former magnificence of design and construction.

The head of the government was the Inca or king, as the word signifies. He represented a despotism so thorough that the food of the people could be withheld at his word. The succession descended from father to son unbroken through their whole dynasty, being claimed by the eldest son of the 'boya' or lawful queen, as she was called, in distinction from the king's numerous concubines. It is a noteworthy coincidence of Egyptian and Peruvian custom, although too much importance should not be given to it, that the queen was selected from the sisters of the Inca—the idea of this revolting practice being to keep the heaven-born race (so called) uncontaminated from the world. The heir-apparent was very early given into the charge of the 'amautas' or wise men, who instructed him in all the knowledge they had, and particularly in religious matters, as the Inca was the head of the church. He was carefully trained in military affairs. At the age of sixteen he was examined very rigorously with the young nobles for admission to the order of chivalry. This examination consisted of the performance of athletic exercises, such as running, boxing, fully trying their agility and strength: severe fasts, mimic combats with blunted weapons. This lasted thirty days. At the conclusion, the successful candidates were presented to the sovereign, and had their ears pierced to receive the round ornament denoting their degree of nobility. This ornament was inserted in the gristle of the ear, and so distended it that in some cases it rested on the shoulders. After this, the candidates moved off to the public square to indulge in songs and dances. This ceremonial was called the 'huaracu.'

The Inca represented the Sun, and presided over all important religious festivals. He alone could raise armies and command them; he controlled the imposition of taxes, the making of laws, the appointment and removal of judges. He was the head of everything, and from whom everything flowed.

The nobility were of the same blood as the Inca, but immeasurably below him in dignity: the proudest of them could not come into his presence unless barefooted, and carrying a burden of some sort upon his shoulder, to denote the homage due to the Inca. The common people were as much below the nobility as the nobility were below the king.

Ethnology, philology, architectural remains, and customs have failed to shed much light on the problem as to the origin of the American peoples, civilised or uncivilised: points of resemblance in skull, physique, language, and customs with Asiatic Mongolians, Europeans, North Africans, Andaman Islanders, Borneans, and Polynesians, have been insisted on, and elaborate arguments made to show that America was populated, partly at least, from North-east Asia, Ireland, Wales, Madeira, Egypt, Japan, and elsewhere. It need hardly be said that none of these theories have been proved, and that most of them are untenable and wholly baseless paradoxes. But the general tendency of anthropologists is to assume as most likely that part of the population at least must have come across Behring Strait from Asia. Sir Daniel Wilson's theory was that there were in America three great divisions of race with as many distinct lines of immigration, the first wave having started from Asia, and reached the South American Continent. Next, an Atlantic Ocean migration occupied the Canaries, Madeira, and the Azores, and so passed to the Antilles and Central America. And thirdly, that after the excess of Asiatic population had spread through the north of Asia, a wave of emigration flowed by way of Behring Strait into North America, thus accounting for the different characteristics of the inhabitants of North and South America. It has, on the other hand, been pointed out that the three races, Incas, Aztecs, and North American Indians, are proved to be connected with each other from the shape and construction of their crania. The skull is distinguished by the presence of an interparietal bone of a more or less triangular form, perfectly distinct the first month after birth, and subsequently united to the occipital, the suture being marked by a furrow which is never obliterated, and which is easily recognised in all the crania.

A point that has been made much of is the similarity of the Inca architecture to that of the Egyptian—the square openings, wider at the bottom than the top, doing duty for arches, and the custom of royal marriages and embalming the dead. Whatever and whenever the origin, it is certainly true that a nation more highly civilised than the Incas preceded and occupied the country before them. But this takes us back to prehistoric times, and we are lost in the mists of tradition.

Let us glance at a few of their civil institutions. The whole of the country was divided into three parts—one for the Sun, one for the Inca, and another for the People. The sizes of the different parts differed in different districts. The lands set apart for the Sun provided means to support the temples and elaborate ceremonial of Peruvian worship, and the numerous priesthood. Those for the Inca supported him in his luxuriously royal state, as also his large household and various demands of the Government. 'The remainder of the lands were divided *per capita* equally among the people.' It is here that the absolute serfdom of the people is so patent. Every Peruvian by law was compelled to marry at a certain age. He was then provided with a dwelling, and a plot of land sufficient to support his wife and himself, an additional portion being granted for every child, double as much for a son as for a daughter. The lands were redivided yearly, being added to or diminished according to the size of the family. The effect of this was to keep the people on the soil, and to prevent them acquiring too much land, and consequently power. The lands were entirely cultivated by the people. First, they tilled the lands of the Sun; next, those of the old, sick, widow, orphan, and soldiers engaged in war; they were then allowed to till their own; and last of all, the lands of the Inca. In like manner, the manufactures and agricultural products were attended to.

The flocks of llama belonged to the Sun and the Inca. It was death to kill one. At certain seasons of the year they were collected from the hills and shorn; large numbers were sent to supply food for the Court, and to be used at the religious festivals and sacrifices. Male llamas only were killed. The wool belonged to the Inca, and was stored in the Government depositories, and dealt out according as the people's wants required. In this way they were provided with warm clothing. When they had worked up enough wool into clothing for themselves, they were then employed in working up material for the Inca. The distribution of the wool and superintendence of its manufacture was in the hands of officers appointed for the purpose. No one was allowed to be idle. Idleness was a crime, and severely punished. All the mines belonged to the Inca, and were worked for his benefit. The various employments were usually in the hands of a few, and became hereditary; what the father was, that the son became. A great part of the agricultural products was stored in granaries scattered up and down the country, and was dealt out to the people as required. It will thus be seen that there was no chance for a man to become rich, neither could he become poor. The spirit of speculation had no existence there.

Education was monopolised by the Inca and the nobility. The teachers were called 'amauta.' The 'quipu' were the books. The 'quipu' was a small cord from one to two feet long, made of variously coloured threads twisted together. From this other, smaller and thinner cords were hung, forming a fringe; all the cords were different colours. The colours represented objects such as gold, silver; sometimes white signified peace; red, war; but they were chiefly used for calculation. The fringe and cord were tied into a number of knots, which stood for ciphers; and these, used in conjunction with the colours, could be made to represent any amount required. These quipu were also the records by which statistics from all parts of the country, relating to population, trade, military and local affairs, &c., were preserved. They were deposited in the Peruvian 'Somerset House' at Cuzco. In this respect the Peruvians were far behind the Aztecs, who had a system of hieroglyphics, which, although a poor substitute for an alphabet of arbitrary signs, was yet capable of expressing more, and in a clearer manner, than could the quipu. These records were under the charge of the amauta, who taught their pupils from them. This was the way history passed down from generation to generation, and it is easy to understand how an event might become exaggerated and distorted.

The Peruvians were not so advanced in scientific knowledge as their northern neighbours. They divided the year into twelve lunar months, each of which was known by a particular name, and distinguished by its own festival. The year was further divided into weeks; but of what length, whether of seven or more days, is uncertain. They based their calendar upon the lunar year, and corrected it by observations taken with the help of cylindrical columns set up round Cuzco. From these columns they could tell the exact time of the solstices. The time of the equinoxes was obtained from a single column with a circle drawn round it, and a diameter drawn east and west. When the sun was almost immediately over the column, and the shadow scarcely to be seen, they said, 'The god sat with all his light upon the column.' The year commenced about the 21st of December. Had the conquerors not been possessed of a ruthlessly destructive spirit, the history of the Incas would be as clear as our own. We are indebted for what we do know to the enlightenment of a few noble Spaniards, such as Sarmiento, Ondegardo, and Gomara.

The religion of the Peruvians was the most important of their institutions. The whole fabric of the State rested upon it. They acknowledged a Supreme Being, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe, whom they adored under the name of Pachacamac. So greatly did they venerate this invisible Being, that they studiously refrained from insulting him by making a representation of him in any form. They worshipped him in one temple only, near Lima—the Mecca of that race—and to which pilgrims gathered from all parts of the Peruvian empire. They also worshipped the Sun with the highest adoration: it was emblazoned on all their banners; sacrifices were constantly being offered up from numerous altars; and they regarded it as the founder of the royal line.

Among other objects which they worshipped were the elements—winds, earth, air, mountains, rivers. The images and idols of conquered nations received a place in their mythology, and were duly worshipped. The temples in which these deities were enshrined literally blazed with gold, particularly that of the Sun. This was so situated that the rays of the morning sun shone in at the eastern portal, lighting up the interior, which, being decorated with golden ornaments, sent back such a glorious flood of light, that no surprise can be manifested at the adoration with which these simple-minded people regarded the great luminary. Near to the temple of the Sun, and next in importance, was that of the Moon: all the decorations of this were of silver. The Stars, Thunder, Lightning, Rainbow, each had its respective chapels or temples. Everything in connection with the religious services was of gold or silver. The religious ceremony was very elaborate, consisting of burnt sacrifices and offerings of flowers. The sacrifice of human beings and the practice of cannibalism did not disgrace their ritual, as was the case with the Aztecs.

The number of priests was very great. The high-priest was called the 'Villac Umu,' and was next to the Inca in importance, being, as a rule, one of his brothers. Their duties were to minister in the temples, and to carry on a ritual more complex than that of any other known religion. There were four principal feasts, the most important being the Raymi, held about the time of the summer solstice. The celebration of this feast was preceded by a general fast of three days; and on the fourth, the Inca and all the people in Cuzco, dressed in their brightest and most gorgeous dresses, went to meet the sun at its rising; when it appeared, they broke into shouts of joy. They had among their religious institutions an order known as 'the Virgins of the Sun,' consisting generally of the daughters of the 'curacas' or chieftains. They were confined in convents, kept from the world, and employed their time in watching the sacred lamp, besides making garments for the Inca and helping to replenish his harem.

TWO MARKET-DAYS AT CUMMERTHWAITE.

By Sarah Selina Hamer.

CHAPTER I.—IN THE AUTUMN.

The market-day at Cummerthwaite was almost over; and the upturned carts which lined the streets leading to the Market Square were fast lessening in number, the process of 'yokin' up' being very busily engaged in, with many 'Whoas,' and cries of 'Stand still, there!' to meek-looking mares and shaggy horses that ventured on the faintest of protests against being brought from fodder and stable, once more to be put between shafts.

Burly farmers of the substantial order in more senses than one, emerged from the doors of banks with an air of smiling satisfaction, or with the pursed lips of doubt as to the day's transactions, and made their way down the High Street to the 'Black Bull,' or the 'Craven Heifer,' or 'The George,' in whose yards were tilted their gigs, or dogcarts, or whitechapels, and in whose coffee-rooms many of them would meet their women-folk, laden with baskets or parcels, or both.

It was barely three o'clock, and the September sunlight streamed into the High Street, down the side streets to the right. It caught the brown hair of a young girl walking rapidly along the footpath, and shot golden gleams amongst its tresses, or revealed the same lying cunningly hidden therein. The little white straw hat which the girl wore seemed to be turned by the same medium, for the moment, into glistening ivory, and the combined colouring was so dazzlingly bright, that it flashed into the eyes of a young man, some twenty yards up the street, and himself in the shade.

'Why, there's Dolly!' he exclaimed aloud; and his steps, which had been somewhat leisurely, suddenly became long and vigorous.

He was a well-built young fellow, though not very tall. He had a frank, pleasant face, and his head was crowned with light-brown hair of the tint generally known as tawny; he had also a slight moustache of the same. His dress and whole appearance betokened the well-to-do young farmer.

The girl appeared to be of his own class. She was lady-like, and was dressed with quiet taste. Dolly Wigton had spent three years at the High School in Carlisle, and was by no means the red-armed, uncouth, uncultivated type of farmer's daughter.

The girl knew the step even before the newcomer strode to her side, and the warm colour rose in her fair face. As they clasped hands, it was plainly to be seen that they were very much to each other.

'I didn't know you were in town, Dolly,' said the young man. 'Where have you been putting yourself all day?'

'Oh, shopping part of the time,' said the girl, 'and I've been across the fields to Moorgate, to see Jenny and'——

'And Jack?' queried the listener, a tiny frown gathering between his eyes.

'Nothing makes a man so stupid as jealousy,' remarked the girl, with a little laugh. 'Wasn't Jack at the market, George?'

'I daresay he went home to dinner,' said George gloomily.

They had been walking down the street as they talked, and at this juncture there crossed it, almost immediately in front of them, a gray-headed, slightly bent, elderly man.

'There's my father,' exclaimed the girl, half under her breath. 'What a good thing he was looking the other way!'

'Will he *never* alter, Dolly? And will you never be persuaded to take your own way?' asked George earnestly. 'How long is this to go on? Two years I've waited already.'

The fair face of the girl paled a little, her mouth expressed pain, and the lids quivered over her brown eyes.

'Dear George,' she said tremulously, 'if you are already weary of waiting, there is nothing for it but to say "good-bye." Father is obstinate, I grant you; and I do not see how his hatred of you Irebys is to be overcome; but wonderful things do happen, and—and—if we are faithful to each other, that should help us to be patient.'

'But—when I know,' answered the young man, in a low, troubled voice—'when I know that, week in and week out, Jack Mosedale is to the fore, and that your father is continually singing his praises, how can I go on hoping—that—that you will hold out, Dolly—that you *will* be—faithful?'

The girl drew herself up slightly, and almost stopped in the street.

'If you cannot trust me, George, then, as I have just said, we had better part—put an end to it entirely.'

'Oh, Dolly darling, forgive me,' cried George. 'I haven't the patience that you have; and our way seems so hedged in that it drives me wild. But as for parting, that would be a hundred times worse. Never mention that again, I pray you, as you love me. You do love me, Dolly? Say it again, and I will never doubt you more.'

The girl lifted her soft brown eyes to his. There was really no need for words, but she obediently murmured them. And the next minute, with a strong firm handclasp, they parted; for they had reached the corner of the 'Black Bull,' within whose archway Dolly's father had disappeared, and whence he might any moment be looking out for her.

The clattering of hoofs on the cobble-paved yard of the inn greeted Dolly's ears as she entered it, and as she expected, she found the bay mare being put into the dogcart, and her father standing by.

'Thou's put off till t' last minute, lass,' he said, a little gruffly, but not unkindly. 'I've just been inside, to look for thee. I was thinkin' I should have to send t' bellman round.'

'Oh, I'm not lost yet, father,' said Dolly. 'I'll go in and inquire about my parcels, and then I shall be quite ready.'

In five minutes more they had emerged from the archway of the 'Black Bull,' and were bowling along the road towards the farm of Greyfell, Plumdale.

'How didst thou find them all at Moorgate?' asked Farmer Wigton by-and-by, turning his weather-beaten face towards his daughter.

'Much as usual, father,' said Dolly. 'Jenny will never be better, I fear.' (Jenny Mosedale was a chronic invalid.)

'You saw Jack, I suppose?' The tone was significant and suggestive, and so was the accompanying look.

'Yes,' said Dolly, a little drily, 'I saw Jack; he overtook me as I went. He had finished his business early.'

The old farmer chuckled with evident enjoyment. 'Finished his business early, had he?' he said. 'It must ha'e come to a very sudden conclusion, then; for when I saw him at nearly twelve he'd nearly all his cows on his hands, and one-half his sheep.'

Dolly looked straight before her between the hedgerows and said nothing.

The farmer chuckled again, and took a sly glance at Dolly.

'The young rascal caught sight o' somebody, an' left his stock to old Ike to sell, I'll wager—that was finishing his business early. Good for Jack—very good!'

Something at this juncture went wrong with the harness, and Farmer Wigton, with a strong expletive about the ostler at the 'Black Bull,' drew rein and jumped down to rectify it. In the silence which ensued, the rumbling sound of light wheels could be heard almost immediately behind.

'George's gig,' said Dolly to herself. 'I hope—I do hope he will not overtake us; father cannot endure to be passed by anybody—much less by him.'

Dolly need not have feared. It was too much pleasure for George to catch an occasional glimpse, over the stubble-fields and hedgerows, of a gleam of brown gold and ivory, for him to think of passing.

But just as he was stepping back into his dogcart, Farmer Wigton caught sight of the gig. His sight was long, and he knew its occupant, though he was nearly a furlong away. Something like an oath escaped him, and he gave Dumpling such a lash as sent her, startled and quivering, into an excited gallop.

'Father!' expostulated Dolly.

'Hold hard,' said the farmer, for the conveyance was swinging to and fro perilously; 'she'll get over it by-and-by. I caught a sight o' George Ireby, an' it was like a red rag to a bull! Whoa, whoa—softly, softly, Dumpling—that'll do, lass—that'll do.'

Dolly said nothing until the mare had settled down into her ordinary pace. Then she screwed up her courage. She recollected George Ireby's face in the High Street of Cummerthwaite, and his words about himself and her being 'hedged in.' They were true words, and the hedge was mostly made up of prejudice, the most difficult of hedges to penetrate. But another attempt must be made. It was a long time since she had ventured upon such. For two years—ever since, spite of premonitions of failure, George had manfully asked her father for permission to woo and wed her: he had been strictly forbidden the house, or to seek or even speak to her elsewhere. Between George's dead father and Dolly's, whose farms adjoined, though their houses were nearly two miles apart, there had existed a long-standing feud. Its origin was unknown to the young folks; but that it had some core of exceeding bitterness to Daniel Wigton could not be doubted. And around it, in succeeding years, had grown quarrels about trespassing cattle, supposed over-reaching in the markets, and other offences, always to hand when readily seized upon.

'I call it very unjust, father—very unjust,' said Dolly. 'What has George Ireby ever done, that you should speak of him in that manner?'

'It's not for a lass to be questionin' her father,' said Daniel Wigton savagely; 'an' I'll not have thee standin' up for George Ireby. He's nothin' to thee, an' never will be.'

'He's everything to me, father—except you.'

Dolly's tone was low and troubled; but it was unmistakably firm.

Father and daughter looked at each other. The duel was becoming close. They had both strong wills.

'I am a year over twenty-one,' continued Dolly. 'Any time within the last twelve months, I could have left you and married George. There's no law in the land could have hindered me. I love him, father, and would have done it, but I could not bear to act so contrary to your will. I have hoped and hoped that you would come to see in time that I could not change about George, and that you cared enough about me to wish me to be happy. But it seems as if '——

Several times before this, Farmer Wigton had essayed to stop the flow of his daughter's words; and now he succeeded by dint of the superior strength of his lungs.

'A deal thou cares about makin' thy father happy,' he almost shouted. 'Thou has one o' the best homes i' Cumberland, an' to please thy mother I sent thee to one o' the best schools. An' away fro' us, nothin' 'ould serve thee, but thou must scrape acquaintance wi' the son o' thy father's enemy. But if I'd ha'e known he was about there o' market-days, it 's not once thou'd ha'e gone back again to board i' Car'ile. Thy mother 's lyin' i' the kirkyard,' he went on, in a slightly softened voice, 'an' I have but thee. I could ha'e done to ha'e kept thee endway; but as lasses will be lasses, an' lads will be lads, an' I reckon sweetheartin' 'll go on till Doomsday, why, I've told thee over an' over again, thou could ha'e Jack Mosedale, as 'ould give his head for thee. He'd come to Greyfell, an' we could all be happy together, if thou'd only say the word.'

Daniel Wigton's voice had dropped almost into one of pleading by this time.

For a moment Dolly said nothing. It might have been thought she was yielding. But it was not so; she was making up her mind whether or not to say a certain thing.

The dale was narrowing; the sun was now below their present horizon. They had crossed the little river which ran through it, but its wimpling over its stony bed could be heard on their right. They had long since passed the turning to Whiterigg, George Ireby's place, and there was no longer the faintest sound of his gig-wheels. A blackbird whistled, a sheep far up the hillside bleated, and the soft lowing of kine told of the homestead which they were approaching.

'Father,' said Dolly softly, breaking the almost solemn silence, 'you have just mentioned my mother. Shall I tell you what she said to me on her death-bed? I don't know why she said it—she told me not to ask her.'

A subtle change came over the rugged face beside Dolly's, and Daniel Wigton gripped the reins with a slightly convulsive movement.

'What was it?' he asked huskily.

'She said,' responded Dolly, after another slight impressive pause—'she said—and it was the day before she died, when you were off to Cummerthwaite—"Whatever you do, Dolly, never, never," she said, "marry a man that you do not love—nor—nor"' ——

Dolly paused; she saw that, for some cause, her father was painfully affected. She had said enough for her purpose. Why go on?

'There was something more: go on. Never tell half a tale,' said the farmer, with painful grimness.

'Well, she said,' concluded Dolly, '"nor never, never marry any man, however much you love him, if you are not really quite sure that he loves you."'

A queer guttural sound escaped the farmer; and could Dolly have seen his face, she would have been considerably startled. But he had almost let fall the reins, and he bent well forward to grasp them, and also turned his head away. He said never a word until Dumpling was mounting the slope to the farm-house, whose white walls and glistening windows now smiled welcome upon the home-comers. Then Daniel Wigton opened his lips; but his voice, even when he did so, sounded to Dolly strange and unfamiliar:

'There's no manner o' doubt about Jack Mosedale carin' for thee, Dolly,' he said; 'but as thy heart doesn't set that way, I'll never ask thee to marry him again. That's t' compact o' my side; an' now on thine: thou must never ask me again to let thee wed George Ireby. To that I'll never consent as long as I live. Thou understands, Dolly?'

'Yes,' said Dolly; 'but I don't promise. It takes two to make a compact.'

'Well, it'll make no difference,' said the farmer angrily, as he jumped out of the dogcart.

CHAPTER II.—IN THE WINTER.

Nearly a week had passed since the great snow-storm. It had come on during the night after the last market, and had continued most of the following day. It lay thick on the level lands and unfenced crofts, but where dyke, or hedge, or bank had made resistance to the wind, there great drifts had gathered two and three and four yards deep. It was terrible work driving in Plumdale. The farmers' men, in some parts of it where the drifts were deepest, had been set to work to cut a road through them.

Dolly Wigton begged her father to forgo the weekly market for once; but habit is second nature, and to miss Cummerthwaite on a Friday would have seemed like breaking up the constitution of things. Indeed, with the contrariness of a man, and an obstinate one to boot, the more Dolly pleaded, the more business the farmer found he had to do there. True, little or no stock could be taken, but he had accounts to draw, and to go to the bank, and there was 'that stack of wheat that Miller Crosthwaite was to make up his mind about,' and a hundred things that Dolly knew nothing of. And so to Cummerthwaite Daniel Wigton went. In the High Street, during the morning, he well-nigh met George Ireby face to face; but, rather than do so, he stepped so suddenly off the foot-path, and with his nose so high in the air, that he narrowly escaped coming to grief on a snow-heap at the curb. George instinctively sprang to his assistance, but Daniel Wigton, by a superhuman effort, not only regained his balance, but flung his would-be helper off. 'I can do without your help, young man,' he said ungratefully and almost brutally.

George's blood tingled, but he restrained himself. Farmer Wigton was an elderly man, and—he was Dolly's father. 'I am glad you are all right,' he said gravely; and thereupon he went his way.

He would hardly own it, even to himself, but there were slight stirrings of shame at his own conduct, in Daniel Wigton's breast.

The yoking up was done very early that day in Cummerthwaite; and there was much buttoning of topcoats and arranging of immense mufflers and rugs, and great striking of arms across the chest, preparatory to setting off home.

'The shortest journey, the most to be envied to-night,' said the landlord of the 'Black Bull' to the wife of his bosom, in the snuggery behind the bar. 'I shouldn't like Wigton's drive up Plumdale; for if we don't have more snow, and a lot too, before he gets to Greyfell, my name's not Jabez Ball.'

Mrs Ball stooped to the blazing fire and complacently rubbed her hands—it had been a good day for business.

'You generally know the weather, Jabez,' she said.

The landlord was not wrong this time, at any rate. Within half-an-hour of leaving the little town, Daniel Wigton, amongst others, was enveloped in a bewildering, driving, whirling downfall of snow. It drove under even his huge umbrella; it got between the folds of his muffler and his neck; it blew into his eyes and half blinded him, making driving straight most difficult.

Though not yet four o'clock, it was almost dark. Later there would be a moon; but it was doubtful if a ray of it could penetrate the snow-clouds. The farmer had had the precaution to light his lamps, and long yellow gleams they cast upon the white snow on either hand.

At a turn in the road, just past the opening to Whiterigg, a more blinding swirl of snow than ever, swept in the faces of man and beast. It was more than Dumpling could stand. She suddenly swerved, the left wheel of the dog-cart was caught on a block of the cut snow, and over it went, its occupant being thrown violently out upon the hard snow-blocks.

Some ten minutes later, George Ireby, returning too from the market at Cummerthwaite, and about to take the turn to Whiterigg from the main road in the dale, saw a dim light ahead of him, which he noticed, to his surprise, did not seem to move. He drew up to make quite sure, and then, much to his own mare's indignation, and spite of her protests, he drove on to ascertain the meaning of it. We know of course what he found. The light was that of the uppermost lamp, which, fortunately, had not been extinguished. Farmer Wigton was lying speechless, insensible, evidently seriously hurt.

What was to be done? He was yet two miles from home, and even if George could get him there, he would be so much farther from medical help. A moment's thought decided the young man. He would take the farmer to Whiterigg, where they were only ten minutes' drive from a doctor.

But Dolly's father at Whiterigg! His own father's enemy at Whiterigg! The very thought of it brought a strange smile at the irony of fate.

But even this plan could not be carried out without help. It was the work of a few minutes to place the prostrate man on the cushions of the dogcart and gig, and cover him with the rugs; to write a few hasty lines to Dolly telling her what had happened, and that he would fetch her later if the weather were fit, and if not, then in the morning; to release the trammelled Dumpling, fasten the missive to his harness, and send him off home, and then to mount his gig and go to Whiterigg for help and a stretcher.

It was more than a week after this night of storm, and the bright morning sunshine was turning the frozen snow-crystals into pearls and diamonds, and deepening the red of the breast of a little robin singing cheerily on the broad stone sill of the mullioned window of his bedroom at Whiterigg, when Daniel Wigton first opened conscious eyes upon his surroundings. And evidently even now his vision was not quite clear, neither was his speech or intellect. 'Mary!' he exclaimed feebly, looking towards a little rounded figure seated near him.

The figure turned a face towards the speaker which must once have been very pretty; even now it was soft in contour, and had a delicate pink colour in the cheeks. The woman's expression was one of surprise, and she waited, not quite sure that she had heard aright.

'Mary!' again said the invalid; 'Mary Renwick!'

A smile of comprehension stole into the little woman's face. 'I'm Ellen Renwick, not Mary,' she said, bending over the invalid and taking his hand. 'You will hardly know me. I was only a little girl when you used to come to Gilsdale to—to see Mary. People do say I have grown very like her—more so, as I have got older—that is the strangest part of it. But alas! Mary has long been gone from us.'

'To be sure—to be sure. What am I thinking of?' said the farmer confusedly. 'But I do not understand things. Where am I?' and he looked round wonderingly.

'You shall know that by-and-by,' said Ellen Renwick gently. 'You had better not talk any more now. You had an accident, and you have been very ill, and are very weak. See, you must let me feed you with this,' producing some invalid's food; 'it will strengthen you.'

'Where—where's Dolly?' was the next wondering question.

'She has been up with you most of the night, and is lying down now. I will fetch her when you have had a sleep.'

Farmer Wigton's weakness was as yet greater than his curiosity; but the satisfaction he seemed to derive in gazing at the sweet peach-like face of Ellen Renwick, half-withered as it was, was greater than either. He looked at nothing else, until sleep overpowered him.

A face looked in at the doorway by-and-by—it was Dolly's. Aunt Renwick (she was George's aunt) put her finger on her lips, rose, and on tiptoe joined Dolly at the door. She drew her into her own room, an adjoining one.

'Your father is conscious at last, and has been asking for you, Dolly. I am so glad. He has gone to sleep now.'

'I *am* thankful,' said Dolly. 'Does he know he is at Whiterigg?'

'Not yet. I thought it best not to tell him until he is stronger.'

'Oh, auntie—you have made me call you so, and George wished it too—do tell me, if you know, what it is that makes my father so bitter against the Irebys—I mean, what was the beginning of it?'

Aunt Renwick hesitated, then she looked again at Dolly's imploring face, and answered:

'Perhaps you ought to know; it was this way. Your father loved my sister Mary heart and soul; and she was half-won, and would have been wholly so, I believe, had not Edward Ireby appeared on the scene. He had a more taking way with him, and he won the day. Now you know why your father always hated George's father.'

'But my father must have got over his disappointment. He married my mother,' said Dolly. But even as the words left her lips, she remembered her mother's dying words, and for the first time understood them. Her mother had never wholly had her father's heart. 'Will he ever forgive? Will he ever consent for me to marry George?' asked Dolly sadly.

Aunt Renwick kissed her, and bade her hope for the best.

'When he is stronger, I shall plead for you both,' she said. 'I may have some influence. He thinks I am like Mary.'

'Some influence' indeed!

'Why, Aunt Ellen,' said George Ireby, six weeks later, when, his broken ribs united, and his brain healed of the concussion, Farmer Wigton had been taken home, and Dolly had gone with him to get ready for her wedding, and George had just returned from seeing them both safely to Greyfell—'my good angel must have been in the ascendant when he suggested the sending for you to Whiterigg. Mr Wigton tells me it is all your doing. You must be a witch to have exercised such a spell over the old man.'

'I shall not allow you to call him an old man, George Ireby,' said Aunt Renwick, dimpling, and actually blushing. 'He is only sixty, and quite hale and hearty; at least he will be, when he has quite got over his accident. And'——

'Well?' queried George, looking round wonderingly at his little aunt, when she paused, evidently in some confusion.

'Well—I thought I wouldn't tell you until he had gone away; but it had to be a bargain; he wouldn't consent on any other terms.'

'A bargain?' said George, an idea for the first time beginning to dawn upon him.

'Yes,' said Ellen Renwick; 'Daniel Wigton would not let Dolly come to Whiterigg unless I would consent to go to Greyfell. So I had to do it, you see—on your account.'

'You dear old auntie!' cried George with enthusiasm. 'But—it's not entirely because of Dolly and me? Do tell me that?'

'Well—not entirely,' admitted Aunt Renwick, blushing more deeply. 'You see, he thinks I am like your mother, George, and I believe he loves me. And I always wondered, even as a child, that my sister Mary should have chosen your father in preference. I think he was badly used, and I am going to try to make it up to him, you see.'

And I may say, in conclusion, that such has been the case. And if there be a happier home in all Cumberland than that at Whiterigg, it is to be found at Greyfell; and Farmer Wigton as well as George Ireby blesses the day when Dumpling turned over the dogcart, that snowy market-day at Cummerthwaite.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

An interesting side-light on the recent war in the East was afforded by Lord Armstrong's speech at the annual meeting of the great Elswick Company at Newcastle-on-Tyne, of which he is the founder and head. From Elswick came most of the war material used by the Japanese, from the elaborately constructed quick-firing guns to the ammunition which fed them. 'The prediction,' said Lord Armstrong, 'which had been commonly expressed, that, however efficacious the refined and elaborate mechanisms of modern artillery might prove in experimental practice, they would be found disappointing under the exciting and rough usage of actual war, has been completely falsified, and the possibility of a return to simpler and less scientific constructions has been put entirely out of the question.' The speaker then proceeded to point out that the victories of the Japanese were in great measure due to their wise forethought in arming their ships with quick-firing guns—one such gun in reality representing a battery of several guns of the old type, while at the same time their range and penetrative power were unsurpassed. The carriages as well as the guns deserved mention, for they were utterly different to the rough wooden carriages which were in vogue not long ago, which required ten or fifteen men to handle them. Modern guns of ten to twelve tons weight can now be trained and elevated by a single hand, and although these wondrous gun carriages must be regarded as highly finished scientific instruments, no single one was disabled in the late war except by a direct hit.

It has long been the practice on our warships to move and load heavy guns by means of hydraulic or steam power. Heavy turrets have also been turned by the same agency, the touch of a lever bringing into noiseless movement a stupendous mass of metal. About eighteen months ago, however, the *Barfleur* was fitted with electric motors to perform the same duties, and orders were given that the gear was to be frequently worked and its behaviour closely observed. The report as to the working of this new application of electricity recently received from the Mediterranean was so satisfactory in every respect that two more battleships, the *Centurion* and the *Renown*, are to be furnished with electric gear for working their guns. The compactness of electrical fittings, when compared with that pertaining to hydraulic or steam gear, is not the least of its advantages on shipboard, where the question of space must ever be such a vital one.

Dairy-farmers are reviving an old grievance when they complain of the system which obtains of marking railway milk churns by barn gallons. This means a loss to the farmer of one imperial gallon on every churn of milk sold. One of the largest farmers in Berkshire contends that as he sends away twenty-six churns of milk daily, the loss amounts in his case to more than three hundred pounds per annum. He proposes that milk should be sold in the churn by weight, each empty churn to weigh fifty-six pounds, and to contain one and a half hundredweight of milk. He proceeds to say that 'if anything is done to alter the present system of marking churns, I hope it will be more in favour of the farmer than the result of the Railway Rates Commission, when the cost of returning the churns empty was taken off the buyer and put upon the farmer.'

A new hydraulic-propelled steam-lifeboat, which has been named the *President Van Heel*, has recently been built by Messrs Thornycroft of Chiswick for the South Holland Lifeboat Association. The trials of this remarkable boat in the North Sea have given great satisfaction to her purchasers, a speed of nine and a half knots having been attained. A remarkable feature of the trials was the remarkable quickness with which the boat can be brought to a standstill when proceeding at full speed ahead—namely, seven seconds. Another valuable property possessed by this new life-saving vessel is her towing-power, the dead-pull measured by the dynamometer being twenty-two hundredweight, which would enable her to take in tow a vessel of about 250 tons burden, or would permit of two or three ordinary lifeboats being towed out to the scene of a wreck. Too often has it happened that the ordinary lifeboat cannot move against wind or tide, without the aid of a tug to carry her on her mission of mercy. The new boat is independent of such help, and we trust that we shall in time have vessels of the same type at the lifeboat stations of Britain.

A scientific investigation was recently undertaken by the Imperial German Health Bureau to inquire into the suitability of the use of aluminium for cooking utensils. They proved that this metal is entirely free from communicating to food any poisonous salt such as is given off by copper, tin, or lead. To make sure that no injurious effects need be feared if aluminium be taken into the system, two physicians, aged respectively twenty-six and thirty-five, volunteered to act as subjects. To each of these was administered *daily* with their lunch about fifteen grains of aluminium tartrate, for the period of one month. By the end of that time neither had lost flesh or appetite, nor felt the slightest discomfort.

For cooking purposes this metal seems to be peculiarly adapted, seeing it is a splendid conductor and retainer of heat, while it has also the advantage of being non-poisonous and non-corroding. A new departure in aluminium cooking utensils has been made within the last few months by Messrs Bowen & Co., of the Phœnix Foundry, Clerkenwell, London, who have, after many failures, succeeded at last in *casting* them in pure aluminium. This permits of their being made of any desired thickness, a most important point in cooking utensils, which, if too thin, tend to scorch the food. Copper sheets are now about 6d. per pound, and aluminium ingots are 1s. 6d. But as aluminium is three and one-third times lighter than copper, bulk for bulk, aluminium is now the cheaper metal; and the above firm are now turning out their cast and polished aluminium utensils at prices under that of corresponding copper utensils. Aluminium has a very high coefficient of contraction, and this stood in the way of casting large and comparatively thin hollow-ware articles—they were very liable to rend in the cooling. A twelve-inch stew-pan contracts about a quarter of an inch, and the internal core had to be so constructed that, when the molten aluminium round it began to cool and shrink, the core also diminished in size and prevented the hot metal (which at a high temperature is weak) from cracking. These utensils are afterwards chilled, and this adds considerably to their strength.

The recent report of the evidence given before the Select Committee on Food-products Adulteration is not pleasant to read. The report is issued in the form of a blue-book, and as that kind of literature does not reach the public or private library, but is mostly stored away on undisturbed shelves, it may be as well to give a few items the wider publicity which they undoubtedly deserve. Margarine, which used to be made from beef fat, is largely contributed to by the knackers' yard; and in Paris the dogs and cats which are found floating in the Seine, and even rats from the sewers, are pressed into the service. Cheap butter is often simply margarine, and according to one witness the fraud is winked at by the inspectors. Much of the bacon sold comes over here in the soft wet state from Chicago; 'and there are a certain number of people both in England and Ireland who dry it and get it up so that it resembles best English and best Irish, and in a good many cases it is sold as that.' Cheese is sophisticated, and other articles of daily consumption are doctored in various ways, until one wearies of the horrid details. The dishonest trader has evidently greatly benefited by the laxity of administration during the past few years, a period of almost suspended legislation, so far as practical matters are concerned.

One of the finest examples of twelfth-century monastic building is Kirkstall Abbey, near Leeds, which was purchased six years ago and generously presented to the Mayor and Corporation of that town by Colonel North. It at once became evident that the ruins would require careful examination and repair before the abbey was thrown open to the public; and when the ivy was removed from the old walls, the extent of the necessary repairs was found to be far greater than anticipated. In many cases the walls were literally crumbling to dust, and parts had to be rebuilt, and fresh stones and mortar inserted in other places, under the directions of the well-known architect and antiquary, Mr J. T. Micklethwaite. The grounds round the abbey have been ornamentally laid out, and at last the beautiful place has been formally presented to the public use. Colonel North paid £10,000 for this handsome present to Leeds, where he was born; and the necessary repairs and laying out of the grounds have brought the total cost up to £23,000.

Some recent disastrous collisions in fogs at sea has drawn attention to the question whether commanders rightly understand what they ought to do when in the vicinity of a vessel which can be heard by her whistle, but is quite invisible. Admiral Colomb, in a letter to the *Times*, has shown that there need really be no misunderstanding about the matter, and points out that it is the erroneous principle at the bottom of the existing rules which has led to recent collisions. He maintains that certain old principles which have fallen into desuetude should be revived without delay. The old custom of the sea, which was never interfered with until 1840, gave one of the two ships in a fog an absolute right to go on her way, while it absolutely compelled the other to fall behind—that is, if they were originally steering for the same point. The rule by which this is established is, that the ship which hears a fog-signal to her left goes on, while the ship which hears it to her right steers in the direction in which she first hears the signal. She is assured that 'the ship that sounded would move out of that line, and as she heard the sound passing away to her left, she would resume her original course.' But although this rule is so simple that a landsman can easily comprehend it, it has been superseded by one which counsels both ships to get away from each other as quickly as they can, and they too often find, in trying to do so, that they come into perilous contact.

Captain S. L. Hinde, who for many years has lived and travelled in that vast region of Equatorial Africa known as the Congo basin, recently read before the Camera Club, London, a paper on 'Cannibals and their Customs,' which was a very interesting exposition of the modern aspect of a most repulsive characteristic of savage humanity. Nearly all the tribes in the Congo basin either are or have been cannibals, and among some of them, Captain Hinde tells us, the practice is on the increase. Since the entry of Europeans into the country there have naturally been greater facilities for travelling, and races who were not originally cannibals have been brought into contact with their more degraded fellows, and have learned to eat human flesh. 'In the night following a battle, or the storming of a town, these human wolves disposed of all the dead, and thus saved us, no doubt, from many an epidemic.' Captain Hinde further remarks upon the custom of smoking meat to make it keep, a practice which would be most useful to the traveller; but he adds that 'we could not, however, buy smoked meat in the markets, it being impossible to be sure that it was not human flesh.'

The Royal Photographic Society has recently held its fortieth annual exhibition in London, and it is agreed on all hands that the work shown marks great improvement. The custom of exhibiting as pictures frames containing a dozen or more very ordinary portraits such as one can see in the show-case of any photographer has happily ceased, and in other ways the objectionable advertisement feature has disappeared. There is no doubt that the old society has been stirred from its lethargy by the advent of a rival exhibition, which, under the name of the Photographic Salon, has this year opened its doors for the third time. In the Salon nothing but what is artistic in treatment is exhibited. Technical excellence, process, apparatus, and everything else is ignored; the picture is *the* thing, and the more it approaches in appearance to a sepia drawing or a mezzotint, the more acceptable it appears to be. The Salon is having a good influence on photographic art generally, but like all new movements it has its weaknesses and eccentricities.

The long-talked-of and once attempted piercing of the Isthmus of Panama in order to form a connecting link between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans is a topic which has once more been revived. Mr A. C. Colquhoun recently addressed the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce on the subject of the position and prospects of the Nicaraguan Canal, which he considers the best of the various inter-oceanic projects which have been mooted. Assuming that this proposed waterway is commenced next year, Mr Colquhoun estimated that in 1905 there would be seven million tons of goods passing through it. The benefits of such a canal would be enormous, and England would share in it by increased facilities for trade with south-western China, which will some day offer the finest possible market for English goods. The canal would also bring Japan, China, Australasia, and part of Malaysia nearer to the Atlantic cities of the United States than they are now to England; and America would therefore benefit to a greater degree than Europe. It will probably be difficult to obtain the necessary capital to start this important undertaking, in view of the disastrous collapse of the Panama Canal Scheme so lately as 1889–91.

A new machine for breaking up refractory material has been introduced by Messrs Easton, Anderson, & Goolden of Erith under the name of the 'Niagara' Pulveriser. The essential parts of this machine consist of a heavy roller moving on the inside of and in the opposite direction to a revolving cylinder. The speed is slow compared with that of other machines of a similar character, being only forty revolutions a minute, and this circumstance, coupled with its peculiar construction, guards it from excessive wear and tear. The roller is so pivoted in its bearings that it will ride over and only partly break up an unusually hard fragment of quartz, and this will happen again and again until the piece is completely pulverised. The powdered matter is drawn away from the roller by means of a fan, whose speed regulates the fineness of the product obtained. The 'Niagara' will pulverise minerals, or corn, cork, bark, &c.; and for mining purposes it has the one great advantage, that it requires no water. It is less costly to fix and repair than the stamps so largely used for mining purposes, and a machine absorbing twelve horse-power will reduce two tons of hard quartz in one hour.

The Post-office represents the willing horse upon which every one seems bent upon laying additional burdens. The last proposal in this direction is that the carriage of agricultural produce should be undertaken by this Government department, so that fruit and vegetables could be delivered at our houses with the morning mails. We fear that the scheme is impracticable, but as some genius may arise who will be able to put it some day into workable shape, we gladly give the matter mention. We have had an abundant harvest. Trees were bowed down with their weight of fruit, and vegetables were decaying for want of cheap carriage rates; at the same time the price of both in our cities and towns was exorbitant. One correspondent in advocating this new postal scheme, writes thus: 'Penny postage was at one time deemed an absurdity. It needs no defence now, and I should not be surprised if, in the course of a few years, a sack of potatoes or a hundredweight of fruit was delivered anywhere between John o' Groat's and the Land's End for the natty sum of sixpence.'

ON THE LECTERN.

Lecterns, or reading-desks, came into use at an early date; there is frequent mention of them in ancient writings, and representations of them in ancient vignettes. They were placed in the centre of choirs in large ecclesiastical buildings as early as the seventh century, and the choristers were arranged in rows on the right and left of them. They are of various forms; but the eagle is introduced in a very large number. With outspread wings, and mounted on a stem at a convenient height for a reader, this grand bird, from an early date, was made to serve the purpose of supporting the framework on which the large and heavy volumes used in the services were placed. There was, probably, some reference, in the thoughts of those who first used them, to the fact that the eagle soared to the most elevated regions, and therefore, in a fanciful way, would be likely to carry the words of the readers or choristers nearer to heaven than they might otherwise ascend. In some instances the inclined framework on the back of the bird was made to accommodate two books, one above the other, and furnished with movable brackets to light the reader. Frequently the eagle is represented standing on an orb, and sometimes on a dragon, and the base of the stem on which it is placed is often raised on lions. A more simple form, without the introduction of the eagle, consists of an inclined book-board raised to a convenient height on a stem. Next to this are examples that have two slanting book-boards which meet at their upper edges like a roof; and there are others with clever groupings of four desks or book-boards. These are generally made of oak or some other hard wood. They nearly all turn on pivots; and some of them are enriched with much carving. Sometimes the eagle is of wood, and the framework of iron. In the handsomest examples base, stem, bird, and book-board are of polished brass.

Besides the lecterns used in the services, there may still be seen others in old churches on which volumes of homilies and commentaries are chained. Old inventories mention many more. An inventory of the church goods of All Saints' Church, Hereford, for instance, dated 1619, tells us of 'The paraphrase of Erasmus chayned to a deske,' and 'Jewell's workes chayned to a deske.' A little later on in the churchwardens' books belonging to the same church there is mention of 'one wainscott deske in the chancell,' which was doubtless a lectern. In the following century (1766) there is another side-light upon the same subject in another entry, 'two candlesticks for the reading-desk.' There are still books chained to a desk in Horncastle Church; and there is one, a tattered volume of homilies, with a chestnut-hued cover, in Alnwick Church. In the vestry of All Saints' Church, Hereford, there is a library, consisting of 286 volumes, all chained to the shelves on which they are placed. In Grantham Church, too, there is a library in chains; and about forty volumes are chained in Turton Church, Lancashire. Kettering Church has two books chained by the covers to a long reading-desk.

Over and above this plan of chaining their books with iron chains, our predecessors had a contrivance for keeping them open that we have also discarded, or have retained only in the modified form of book-marks. The narrow strip of silk, or braid, that we place between the pages of a book, they fastened to the topmost edge of the lectern, and made the ends heavy with leaden weights. When they wished to keep a book open they brought two of these strips down from the ridge of the lectern, one over each page, which prevented all motion of the leaves. When not in use they were allowed to hang down. There are many vignettes in ancient MS. Bibles and other writings showing lecterns with these contrivances attached to them, and the leaden weights of a disc-like form depending from them. The well-known French antiquary, M. Viollet-le-Duc, gives five examples of them from ancient writings preserved in French libraries in his *Dictionnaire Raisonné du Mobilier Français de l'Epoque Carlovingienne à la Renaissance.* One of them shows these ancient book-marks attached to the lower side of a desk on which a scribe is writing, and they are passed up over the book or writing, and over the top edge of the lectern, and allowed to depend from its upper side, instead of the lower one, as in other examples; and there is another instance given in which the weights are fastened to the side, in which case they would be merely lifted and placed upon any sheet that was required to be kept in position.

Both Oxford and Cambridge have interesting specimens of ancient brass eagles in their college chapels. The county of Norfolk, too, is rich in them; Southampton has two, one of which is very fine, and supported on four lions; Bristol has two, one in St Mary Redcliffe, and the other in St Mary-le-Port; Southwell Minster has a grand example which is said to have belonged to Newstead Abbey; and there are others to be met with here and there, as at Campden in Gloucestershire, Huish Champflower in Somersetshire, Salisbury, and Croydon. There is an example of a wooden eagle in Winchester Cathedral; another in All Saints' Church, Monksilver, Somersetshire; and another in Exeter, in St Thomas's Church. There are a few examples of ancient brass lecterns without eagles. An oaken lectern, with four desks, in St Martin's Church, Deptling, Kent, is very richly carved. And other oaken examples may be seen in other churches in the same county, as well as in Surrey and Cheshire especially. There is a very early one in Holy Cross Church, Bury, Huntingdonshire.

There is an interesting brass eagle in Long Sutton Church, Lincolnshire. It stands only two inches short of six feet in height, and its base rests on three lions. There are bold mouldings at intervals up its stem, which is surmounted by a ball or orb rather less than a foot in diameter; and on this ball stands the bird, with beak slightly open and wings outspread, sturdy, prim, and square, though made to revolve upon the stem just below its standing-place. There is a richly sculptured porch to this church with a chamber over it, a stone stair leading up to it, and with a stone-groined roof, and various other features of interest, yet this quaint item holds our remembrance after some of them are forgotten.

One of the three superb old churches in Coventry has a fine brass lectern. This edifice, the proud possessor of one of the 'three tall spires' for which the city is celebrated, is pervaded with special charm, as it retains most of the touches given to it when first built. Like its two grand comrades, Trinity Church is light, lofty, and spacious; and like them it is full of memories of the industrious citizens who made Coventry a place of note in former times.

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THE FINGER OF HANKIN.

By C. J. CUTCLIFFE HYNE,

Author of 'The Recipe for Diamonds;' 'Honour of Thieves,' &c.

CHAPTER I.

He was called William Edward Hankin Seale, and by giving him the name of Hankin, his godfathers and godmothers considered that they had provided him with brilliant prospects. Wherefore they economised, and forbore to add the usual christening-mug and silver feeding-tackle. In after years William Edward Seale had it constantly repeated to him that there was a man called Hankin who lived on a place called the West Coast of Africa, where he had amassed wealth, and was still amassing.

In his school-days William Edward Seale said little about the vague Hankin. He learned that West Africa was a considerable distance from Charterhouse in miles; that the climate was hot, through some connection which it had with a thing called the equator, upon which the sun apparently travelled as a bead does upon a wire; and that the Coast produced gold-dust, ivory, and monkeys. Afterwards he got hold of *The Cruise of the Midge*, and added to this list of products, slaves, fever, sunstroke, and picturesque fighting. He pictured Hankin as a king of countless negroes, who owned a long black schooner for nefarious purposes, and who went out for rides on his own private elephant and ate cocoa-nuts free of cost. He rather envied the old gentleman, but he did not swagger about him then. Later, however, he did both.

He went from Charterhouse to a bank in London, where he laboured easily, but acquired no unwieldy prosperity. He lived slightly beyond his income, but kept the leeway in check by waving Hankin before the eyes of his duns. He pointed out that the West Coast was notoriously unhealthy, and that Hankin could not live much longer. He was generous in the matter of interest too. He said that when he put on a black tie for Hankin, they would see that there was nothing mean about him when he came to pay for accommodation. So he lived on; and the rumours of Hankin provided him gratis with dances and theatre paper; and dinners and Sunday river-parties were bestowed upon him by people who had marriageable daughters. 'It's no use your asking me to pay for anything,' he would say cheerfully. 'I've barely a sixpence beyond my salary—at present.'

Occasionally he came across some man who had been in the colonial service or in a trading house on the West Coast, and asked about his connection, who, he stated, was some sort of a nineteenth cousin. But none of the Coasters ever knew about Hankin, or (what is perhaps more accurate) they never said they knew. So, as far as William Edward Seale was concerned, Hankin remained vague and nebulous; but Seale never lost faith in his riches and dutiful cousinly affection (as bespoken by the afore-mentioned godparents); and calculated on the approaching windfall with certainty and sweet delight.

It was the coming of Captain Charteris with Nancy that gave him his first definite idea of Hankin. Charteris wired from Liverpool to ask for an interview, and was invited to come up and dine at the club and talk matters over there. Charteris came, and enjoyed his meal, as most men do after a course of Coast and steamer fare; but he talked whilst he was eating, and what he said did woful damage to Seale's appetite. Afterwards they went to a quiet corner of the billiard-room for coffee and cognac; and between whiffs of a good cigar, Charteris went on with his tale:

'We aren't mighty particular out there as a general rule, y' know, but that was a bit too blackguardly and low for anything. They kicked him out of the service, of course; and they told him that if he didn't clear out of the colony one-time, they'd prosecute him to boot, and he'd get sent home to do five years for an absolute cert. So he cleared; and went to Lagos.'

'But he was very rich at that time, wasn't he?' Seale asked.

'Rich? He owned the finest assortment of debts of any man in Accra. They had to pay his steamer-fare to get him away. I don't believe the old scamp ever did have a cent beyond his pay, but he'd a knack of hinting that he was a millionaire, and people sometimes believed him. He blarneyed himself into a trading house in Lagos on the strength of swaggering about money, which of course he hadn't got, and he might have worked himself back into a comfortable position if he had only chosen to keep straight. But that was not his way. He hung on there for a couple of years till he'd got his fingers well into the pie, and then one fine day he pulled out all the plums that were available and skipped by the British-African boat to Grand Canary. He'd about a thousand pounds all told in his pocket when he landed at Las Palmas, and on the strength of it he married that pretty little woman I was telling you about, who died when Nancy was born.'

'After which he took the child back to the Coast again, and brought her up like a savage?'

'No, he didn't; and that's about the only good point I ever heard the old ruffian accused of. He left her in Grand Canary, farmed her out (don't you call it?) in a village just outside Las Palmas, and went back again to the Coast to find money for the up-keep of her. It was a pretty plucky thing to do, because several gaols were waiting for him anxiously, and he'd dirtied his ticket so thoroughly up and down, that no white man would touch him with the end of a swizzle-stick. What he did was to steam down-coast to Lagos Roads, change over to the branch-boat, and get across the bar, and then slip away from her by native canoe. He didn't land on the island at all. He went off over the lagoon, and then on, right up to the back of the Egba country. There was a hot war on then with the Yorubas, and it was about nine to one he got knocked on the head and chopped; but somehow the old scamp slipped through, and then he started in to collect rubber. He got a mud-and-grass hut built, and lived on native chop, and must have had a pretty tough time of it at first, because all the roads were blocked, and he could neither get "trade" up-country nor send his rubber down. But after a bit, things went better with him. He got his rubber carried down to Lagos, contrived to lay hold of a few domestic slaves to do his work, and was able to send remittances to the woman who farmed Nancy outside Las Palmas. If he'd stuck to what he'd made then, he might have lived pretty comfortably, because trade-gin makes tolerable cocktails when you're used to it, and up in that part of the bush you can always get chickens and mutton if you care to pay. But he didn't do that: he stuck to the cheap native chop; and when he had fever he grudged himself pills and quinine: it took him all he knew to scrape up eighty pounds a year for Nancy.'

'Oh, my hat!' said Seale; 'and I thought that man was a millionaire!'

'I wish,' said Charteris, 'you could have seen him when I did. I was up at the back of the Egba country with a Commission, and we picked up the wood-smoke of his cooking one day in the dusk. We had missed the village we were trying for, and had no fancy for collecting fever by squatting out in the bush. So we pushed on and came upon a few chimbeques in a clearing. A thing that called itself a white man was in one of them, and that was Hankin. He was down with black-water fever, and when the doctor had done a turn with him, I went in to stand my watch. He wasn't an inviting spectacle, and if you knew what black-water fever is—which you don't—you'd understand why. But he was a white man, or had been white once, and out there one feels a sort of kinship to one's colour. So I sat by the poor devil and heard his yarn; and when he asked me a bit of a favour, I couldn't very well refuse it, because, you see, he asked when he was in the very act of pegging out. He wanted me to pick up this youngster of his as I was going home, and hand her over to you.'

'But why to me of all people?'

'Hankin said,' replied the other stolidly, 'that he knew you thought you'd some claim on him, and that therefore he considered he'd a claim on you. I said I didn't see the force of his argument. He said that was his palaver, and would I do what I was asked, or have a very nasty taste left on my conscience by refusing? So of course I was forced to say "Yes," and there was an end of the matter. The Houssas buried him at sunrise, and we marched on.'

'But what on earth am I to do with the brat? I'm making a poor enough show of keeping myself. I had—er—expectations once, but they haven't come off, and I'm more largely dipped than I care to think about. I'm only a poor brute of a bank clerk with half-nothing a year by way of pay. It strikes me you've done somebody a pretty mean turn.'

'How could I help myself?' said Charteris with a shrug. 'I didn't know you from Adam, and Hankin shoved the job on to me at a peculiar time. You haven't seen a man die the way he did, in a bush hut, with no one round but savages, or else you'd understand. I can quite imagine it's an unpleasant surprise to you; but you know—you needn't take over the youngster.'

'What?' said Seale quickly; 'you'll keep her on yourself?'

Captain Charteris laughed harshly. 'I shall drag out my own leave here in England mostly on tick, and then get back to the Coast again.

Man, I haven't thirty pounds in the world. I couldn't afford to be saddled with a dog. I suppose it comes to this: we shall both repudiate her.'

'And the result will be?'

'Workhouse, I suppose.'

'What a ghastly thing to think about!'

'My dear sir, we can gather comfort from knowing it's no fault of ours. It's a case of "sins of the fathers." Hankin shouldn't have been a blackguard; or if he was, he shouldn't have married; or if he did marry, he shouldn't have allowed Nancy to step out into the world. If he's any sense of decency left, Hankin will be gnashing his teeth this very minute at the thought of the mischief he's brought about.'

Seale hit the table in front of him so that the cigar ashes jumped. 'This is a horrible business anyway,' he said, 'but it's got to be put an end to. The more we think over it, the worse it gets. You and I have no legal responsibility; so we'll just hand over this calamitous brat to the police, and shuffle clear of the whole matter. Where have you stowed her?'

'At the "Metropole." We'll go there one-time if you like.'

'Yes,' said Seale, and strode noisily out of the room.

CHAPTER II.

They exchanged only one remark on the way across. 'She's a taking little beggar,' said Charteris, 'though I don't think she cares much for me.' Upon which Seale broke out against him with sudden violence and profanity, and insisted on the subject being dropped. And after that they marched down Northumberland Avenue in silence.

'It's right up at the top,' said Charteris, as they walked into the hall of the hotel. 'I economised in the matter of rooms. So we may as well go up by the lift. Shall I tell the porter to have a four-wheeler ready in five minutes?'

'Oh, do anything you like,' said Seale. 'No, you needn't bother about that now, though. There are cabs always ready. Here, come along: there's a lift just going up.'

Two minutes later Captain Charteris opened a door and showed Seale a pretty child of six asleep in a deep arm-chair. She woke as they came into the room, nodded to Charteris, and stared at his companion critically. For once in his life Seale was tongue-tied before a lady. He somehow or other felt unutterably mean, though (as he carefully explained to himself) there was no just cause for this feeling. And as an effect, all initiatory small-talk left him. There was a long silence in the room, and it was the child who just broke it. 'You must be the gentleman,' said she to Seale, 'who is going to take care of me?'

'No,' he answered sullenly, 'I am not.'

'Oh,' said Nancy, leaning back in her chair again, 'I am sorry for that.'

Seale could not help asking 'Why?'

'Because,' came the answer, 'I like you. I like you better than him,' she added, with a nod across at her steamer escort.

'This is gratifying,' said Charteris. 'But I am afraid, young lady, that it is a rather useless avowal. Now we've come to take you out for a drive somewhere. So suppose you put on your hat and jacket.'

'Can't,' said Nancy cheerfully. 'I've not begun to dress myself yet. I'm not growed up enough for that. But you,' she said, with a nod at Seale, 'can put on my things for me if you like. They're all lying there on that sofa. Shoes first.'

'Oh, look here,' said Charteris, 'we'd better ring for the stewardess—chambermaid, I mean.'

'No,' said Seale; 'I may as well do what I can for the kid! Hang it man! let me do something. God knows I'm feeling brute enough as it is.'

So with infinite pains and clumsiness he put on Nancy's outdoor raiment, and when he had finished, he stepped back to overlook his handiwork.

'Well?' she said.

'What?' he asked.

'Don't I look nice?'

'Ye-es, I suppose you do. Yes, distinctly you do.'

'Then what are you waiting for?'

'I don't understand.'

'The others,' said Nancy judicially, 'when they dressed me, and when I was good, and when I looked nice, always gave me a kiss to finish up.'

Charteris laughed.

Seale turned on him savagely with a 'Drop that?' Then he stooped and took hold of the child's hand and said, 'Come on.'

'Kiss first,' said Nancy. 'I've been good.'

Shamefacedly Seale pecked at her with his mouth, and Charteris laughed again. 'I wouldn't do it,' said Charteris, 'if I were you. That sort of thing leaves a nasty taste afterwards—when you remember she is rigged in workhouse uniform, you know.'

Seale kissed the child again, this time more scientifically. 'Now, look here,' he said: 'we'll just drop that foolishness, please, for always. If you think I'm going to let this jolly little beggar go to the parish pauper shop, you're badly mistaken. What will become of her in the end, I'm hanged if I know; but for the present, and until something turns up, I'm going to take her off to my own rooms; and I guess my landlady and I'll dry-nurse her between us. We shall probably make a poor enough job of it, because funds are very scarce; but I guess we're about the only opening Nancy has before her at present.—Come along, Nancy, and we'll drive off in a rubber-tyred hansom to my palatial chambers.'

'I say,' said Charteris, as they were going back along the corridors, 'you're rather a good sort, you know.'

Seale turned upon him with a sudden glow of passion. 'I'm about the most unlucky brute in London this minute,' he cried, 'and if there's one man I ought to hate, that's you. You've landed me in an infernal mess, and there's no getting out of it. You knew what she was; you'd seen her; and I don't think you did the fair thing not telling me beforehand. Of course, I thought that, being Hankin's kid, she'd be —well, just fit for the workhouse. How was I to know that she was like this?'

'You're a bit unreasonable.'

'I'm not going to argue with you,' said Seale. 'The thing's done, and I've got no use for you any further.'

'I don't quite take your meaning.'

'Well, it's this, Captain Charteris: what little I've seen of you will last me the rest of my time. You may say good-bye to Nancy if you like, but you needn't bother to shake hands with me.'

THE SHOE-BLACKS OF PARNASSUS.

By H. Lascaris.

There is nothing sensational in the Parnassus of which I propose giving a short account, unless it be in the rapidity of its rise, and the widespread field of its activity. The 'Parnassus' of Athens is a literary association, holding its meetings in a magnificent building, where subscription balls, lectures, and concerts are given for the benefit of the evening classes held there for shoe-blacks, and other waifs and strays. The whole working of this establishment and its admirable results are so wonderful, that an inquiry into its modest origin and gradual development should be interesting.

The late antiquary, Mr Lambros, was well known all over Europe for his splendid numismatic collection. He had five sons, all of whom are now leading members of Greek society as physicians, professors, and antiquaries. One of them, Mr Spiridion Lambros, is now completing for Cambridge his catalogue of the manuscripts in the various monasteries of Mount Athos. With such a learned father, it was but natural that the sons should feel attracted towards books and study. The four youngest brothers early conceived the plan of forming themselves into a literary club, 'with power to add to their number.' This association was kept a profound secret at first, even from their eldest brother. With the enthusiasm peculiar to their age, they styled their club the 'Parnassus.' One of the brothers was appointed honorary secretary, and the report of the club's first meeting is written in a baby hand, but quite legible: 'The first meeting of this club, consisting of four members, took place on Sunday the 9th day of October 1865, at 11.40 A.M. At this meeting it was suggested that the committee should buy a box of envelopes for the use of the club. The suggestion was agreed to by all the members. The meeting broke up at 12 o'clock.'

These mysterious meetings used to take place in the housemaid's room, which was safe from intruders, being on the basement. The young members read papers on history, literature, &c. By degrees the little fellows disclosed their secret to a few of their friends, including the eldest Master Lambros, who all joined the club. Most of these have since become celebrated all over Greece, and many of them are known throughout Europe. As the number of the members increased, it became necessary to hire a room for the meetings of the club. Mount Lycabettus was considered quite outside Athens at that period, and a room was therefore hired there for a few drachmas a month. In order to keep down the expenses of the society, it was agreed that the members should take it in turns to sweep and clean this room, and that letters relative to the meetings of the club should be delivered by the members themselves.

When they took possession of their new quarters, it was felt that every one ought to contribute something to the club pocket. Money was carefully saved up for this purpose, and we find several entries of books, photographs, and small articles of furniture. Master Koromilas, who is now the editor of a successful daily paper, contributed a lamp. This gift seems to have been the source of much animated discussion on the part of the members; all those whose turn it was *not* to trim the lamp giving it an excellent character.

Soon after the removal of the club to new premises, it seems that the elder boys had persuaded Dionysius Lambros to retire, as they felt it was humiliating to have in their midst a member still in petticoats, they having all reached the dignity of knickerbockers. Mr D. Lambros is a well-known antiquary and numismatic collector. In fairness to him as well as to the club, it must be added that he was re-admitted a few years afterwards.

It was not long before the club appointed a committee chosen from its midst for awarding prizes to the best written essays and poems. Although these meetings had been held with enough mystery to satisfy even a Nihilist, a gentleman with a white beard found his way there one evening—no less a person than Mr Dragoumis, the editor of the *Pandora*, who gave the boys a capital notice in his magazine. This article led several youths to join the 'Parnassus.'

It is amusing to compare the income and expenditure of a few drachmas a month with that of 1894-95—namely: Expenses, 33,625 dr.; receipts, 34,269 (that is, as the drachma equals a franc, £1385). As these juvenile members grew up, they one by one became university students, but one and all remained true to their club, which is now the most important literary association in Greece, and still continues to award prizes for the best literary composition of the year.

While they were yet young and obscure, one cold winter's night the poet Basiliades and one or two other members, including Mr M. Lambros, were walking home from their club, when they came upon a little figure crouching beneath the porch of a church, and nearly frozen to death. Presently they came upon another, and then another, in the same plight. This made a great impression upon them, and remembering their own comfortable homes, they wondered whether anything could be done to improve these poor children's lot.

At the very next meeting Mr Basiliades spoke of the pain he had felt at sight of all these forlorn children growing up in ignorance of every law human and divine, in the midst of a society of which they would, no doubt, one day become the curse, while a little kindness and a helping hand held out to them in time might convert their lot into a happy one, and make them useful to themselves and to others. The young poet's enthusiasm was contagious. It was at once agreed that the club should be opened to these children, and that the members should undertake to teach them reading and writing and arithmetic, and endeavour to instil into their hearts the first principles of religion and morality.

Such is the simple and unostentatious origin of one of the most useful philanthropical institutions of Greece. The newspapers soon published leading articles on these evening classes, which made many in and out of Greece take an interest in so novel an undertaking, and subscriptions and even legacies now came freely from Greeks all over Europe. Two years after this school had been established, its founders could already rely on a sum of 10,059 francs per annum, and the 'Parnassus' of Athens began to be copied in many provincial towns of Greece.

To fully appreciate the usefulness of such an institution, it must be borne in mind that Greece had only recently risen from bondage, and that even schools for rich men's sons were few and far apart in Athens. No one had ever thought of teaching the lower classes. The country was poor, and books were a luxury even among the rich. So eager were the little street arabs to avail themselves of these evening classes that the zealous, if somewhat inexperienced, teaching of the members was soon found insufficient for the daily increasing number of the pupils, and it was superseded by that of professional masters; but it has remained an inviolable rule that at least *one* member of the committee must be present every evening during the hours of tuition.

The pupils consist mostly of shoe-blacks, whose work is over by sunset, but many errand-boys, newsboys, and even domestic servants, gladly avail themselves of the excellent teaching of this establishment. It is a curious thing that, with the exception of servants, who come mostly from the islands, the other boys all seem to choose their business according to their birthplace; for every errand-boy comes from Corinth, every shoe-black from Megalopolis, and every newsboy from Gorthinia. This rule is so general that one might search Athens through for a shoe-black from Gorthinia or a newsboy from Megalopolis, without ever finding one.

Before the establishment of these classes, it was usual for a certain set of men to go round to the places mentioned above, and hire boys of their parents for some hundred francs per annum. These boys were brought to Athens, and worked to the utmost by rough masters, who treated them cruelly and fed them shamefully. The 'Parnassus' has taken the greatest pains to abolish this inhuman practice, by writing to the parents of such children and explaining that, even as a speculation, they might make at least five or six times as much by letting their children work on their own account. They also shut their door against boys as long as they remained in bondage. Thanks to the 'Parnassus,' it is now most rare to find a child thus oppressed, and the traders are beginning to find that the business is an unprofitable one.

Such is the good result of this institution that, whereas only a few years ago the shoe-blacks and errand-boys were considered the most disreputable little fellows in the town, the cap worn by the 'Parnassus' boys is now looked upon as a sufficient security for entrusting the wearer with the most valuable parcels; their honesty has now become proverbial. Masters are now anxious to obtain servants from their ranks.

In order to encourage habits of thrift, the committee has established a savings-bank, where every pupil may bring his earnings once a week, and receive interest thereon at the rate of six per cent. He is free to withdraw all or part of his money whenever he pleases. The interest was originally paid out of the club's funds, but when the depositors grew so numerous that it was no longer possible to do this, Mr M. Lambros, general secretary and ex-member for Arta, generously came forward and offered to be their banker. As the money passing through the 'Parnassus' savings-bank is about twenty thousand francs per annum, and he loses about twenty per cent. by the arrangement, this was a very kind offer.

Although the 'Parnassus' has now removed to one of the most spacious buildings in Athens, the applications for admission to its evening classes are so numerous that it is necessary to refuse many applicants. The number of pupils now amounts to one thousand three hundred and thirty-five. They are all gratuitously provided with books and writing materials. Besides the members' subscription, presents, and bequests, the 'Parnassus' now receives a small government subvention, and an allowance from the city of Athens. Its funds are also increased by means of the annual subscription ball, and the lectures that are given in the upper part of the building. Last year a novel experiment was made in these rooms. Mr Polites, Mr Lambros, Mr Talacosto, and other well-known professors and literary men, gave a course of lectures for ladies on history, poetry, &c., and a course of religious lectures was given during Lent. These were attended by the *élite*, including the Queen and the Princesses Sophie and Marie. This experiment proved so successful, that the lectures for ladies will probably become a regular institution at the 'Parnassus.'

The literary club itself is divided into four departments: (1) Fine arts and literature; (2) law and political science; (3) philosophy and archæology; (4) physics. The debates and the papers read at these meetings are published in the club's yearly pamphlet.

Not content with their teaching among the poor, the 'Parnassus' commenced a fresh undertaking last year—that of assisting released prisoners. It has been proposed also to start an economical kitchen, where 'Parnassus' boys may have a good dinner for a few pence. Mr M. Lambros has explained that their object was not to form philosophers or literary men, but to give the boys a little practical knowledge which would enable them to carry on their trade in a sensible way, and provide them with amusement for their leisure hours. They know of more than five hundred of their former pupils who are settled all over Greece as agriculturists, mechanics, farmers, and shopkeepers. One of them is managing an important Greek business in Calcutta. In one or two cases of exceptional talent and application, the club has helped the pupils to follow a course of special studies. They received a letter of thanks lately from an old pupil who had been appointed professor of Literature at the university of Athens, and another of their old pupils has become manager of the 'Parnassus' of Pyrgos.

All Athens rejoiced a short time since when a little 'Parnassian,' who was selling lottery tickets for the Archæological Society, happened to keep one on his own account, and to win the first prize, consisting of twenty thousand drachmas. Lambros himself assisted the boy to get the money and to place it at the bank. On being asked what he would do with the money, he calmly replied that he hoped there would be enough for all he was intending to do. 'In the first place,' said he, 'I am bound to give a thousand drachmas to my pal, for when I was going to the drawing, he asked me what I should give him if I got the first prize, and I said a thousand drachmas. Then I am bound to improve our village church, for when my father gave me his blessing before I started for Athens, he said he hoped God would help me to grow a good man, and come back and be useful in our village; so I stopped on the road and went into our little church, and promised God that if He made me get on and come back as my father wanted me to be, I should improve that church and always be good. So of course I shall do that, first of all. Then I must give my sister a dowry: two thousand drachmas will be enough for that. There are not many girls in our village that get so much. I hope the "Parnassus" will let me give two hundred drachmas for a prize for the first boy in my class; and the remainder of the money will go to pay my father's debts, and start a little shop, so that I can keep him, as he is getting rather old for work now.'

The boy carried out all his plans, and the last time the club heard from him, he informed them that, having prospered in his business, he was about to marry, and ended by asking Mr Lambros if he would give away the bride.

THE FORGED MADONNA.

By R. M. Strong.

CHAPTER I.

It was the hour of sunset, and all Florence lay bathed in the full mellow radiance. The long level shafts of light fell warmly and lovingly and with a lingering caress on every turret and tower, every cupola, buttress, pinnacle, and spire; deepening the shadows and forcing up the lights of Brunelleschi's monster dome, and gilding and glorifying the already glorious city with a thousandfold richer loveliness, a quite indescribable splendour peculiar to the place and hour; bringing out the warmth of the soft sienna browns, and the rich purity of the purply grays, or still more delicate dove-colour of the weather-stained marbles of Giotto's famous campanile; sharpening each vein and shaft, and sparkling from every mullion and capital, and rousing myriads of answering reflections from the glass of window and mosaic, and from the gold of finial or cross. Farther afield were groves of olive-trees and rows on rows of stately, solemn cypress, in sharp contrast to the white walls of some villa or castle nestling in their midst; below, the gently gliding Arno flowed softly, smoothly by; while high above all pulsated the ineffable, lustrous purity of the azure sky, so deep, so soft, so sweet, as surely no other sky was ever yet, or ever well could be.

Away up on the terrace of San Miniato, drinking in the full beauty of the scene, stood a man and woman. Spite of the warmth and sunshine, the man looked careworn and haggard, and was leaning partly on a stout stick he carried, and partly on his wife's supporting arm.

Presently, with a deep irrepressible sigh, he turned to address her: 'Yes, it is indeed a Paradise on earth; but for me it has the hectic loveliness of approaching death. Oh Elsie!' he broke out passionately, 'it is killing me—killing me! and what—what will become of you?' And his eyes sought hers with a hunted, desperate appeal that she found it hard indeed to meet.

And truly, Elsie Maynard, strive to hide it from her husband as she might, was well-nigh desperate. He, Geoffrey Maynard, was an artist; clever, but with his way still to make. In the sudden flush of a fleeting prosperity, the outcome of his first success, he had ventured to link her fate with his, and bring her to Italy to share the struggle with him; and after an all too brief season of happiness almost without alloy, had come the swift menace of poverty's wolf to haunt their humble door. At first he had spent the time studying the gems of the Pitti and Uffizi galleries, until the sudden loss of his expected patron left him stranded and barely able to find the wherewithal to live, however poorly, in their attic home. Still, somehow, live they did: they were well and strong, and, being young and inexperienced, could hope for the better times that were so cruelly long in coming; until as winter passed away, and spring gave place to summer, when the long hot days—none too long for all he found to do—coupled with the hope deferred, the repeated disappointment, that sooner or later eats the stoutest heart away, sapped his overtaxed strength, and now, as he said, the very beauty of the glorious summer sun was killing him, dragging him down, and he must go to some less enervating clime, or surely die. And both knew that to go was impossible. They had nothing, absolutely, beforehand, and only so long as he could work had they been able to keep pace with their sternly reduced expenses; while that very day the brush had fallen from his nerveless hand to warn him that the crisis was fast approaching when, for a time at least, he would have to paint no more.

Vainly had his wife tried to bid him not despair. The words sounded as a mockery from her own hopeless lips, and died away to end in a long silence as they stood there on the old terrace, whither they had gone for a breath of air. And oh! how much greater a mockery it all seemed to the miserable pair, that glorious, pitiless sun, and that scene so wondrous in its fatal beauty. Both were so cruelly helpless, so far from friends or home; while she, poor English girl, what could she do, an alien among strangers, to win for him the means to get away—only to get away—to England—anywhere, where there was not this horrible enervating heat?

'Come, Geoffrey, you are taxing your strength too much. Let us go—home.' And the last word seemed to pain her even to pronounce it, so bitter was its contrast to her latest thought.

'Home—ay, home!' he murmured bitterly. 'Would that we might go—home!' And with that his hand pressed her arm more heavily, and they walked slowly down the hill and across the many-arched bridge over the river, when, feeling somewhat better, nothing would serve but they must turn out of their way and go round by the Piazza del Duomo to rest on Dante's seat and take a nearer view of the glorious cathedral and Giotto's campanile—'that bright, smooth, sunny surface of glowing jasper, spiral shafts, and fairy traceries; that serene height of mountain alabaster, coloured like a morning cloud, and chased like a sea shell'—whose contemplation, spite of his overpowering anxiety, the artist found inexpressibly soothing.

'There,' he exclaimed at last. 'It has done me good; I feel better now: let us go.' And still leaning on his wife, they passed on together, under those famous Casa Guidi windows, to where, up a side street, they turned presently to enter beneath an archway into an old courtyard.

A strange old-world place, with a curious air of aloofness from the stir of common life; so near, yet so remote, that one would think Death itself almost might have passed it by. With the stone of its arches and mouldings all crumbling, and weather-stained to soft warm browns and tender grays, and, all lichen and creeper crusted as they were, forming the loveliest possible background to the two or three picturesquely attired women grouped lazily about the central fountain, whose musical drip, drip hummed a low undercurrent to the still more musical-spoken words issuing from the soft Tuscan tongues.

Through the arch and across the courtyard crept the artist and his wife, followed by curious but not unkindly eyes; while the idle, gossiping chatter died away to a low murmurous refrain, through which the soft plashing of the falling water defined itself more clearly as the pair passed on to mount the wide stone steps and cross the uneven, irregular mosaic giving access to the spacious entrance-hall, beyond which lay all the home they knew.

'Ah! the poor English!' sighed one dark-eyed handsome woman sympathetically as they disappeared. 'She will not have to help him thus many times more. Soon—unless there is a change—will he be carried down—feet foremost to his long home. Is it not so?' And she turned inquiringly to the rest, who sighed with her their unanimous assent; while said one: 'Never more wilt thou have to sit there, Marietta, dressed in thy best. Truly he has painted thee for the last time.'

'Ah! and what a painter he was!—But what of that? *Che sara sara.* The cruel Death comes to us all, both rich and poor alike!'—this with some complacency, spite of the speaker's sympathy so recently avowed. 'Not that they were any richer than one's self. For they lived—body of Bacchus, how they have lived! So barely, so'—— And the full tide of gossip flowed freely on.

Meantime the two had slowly mounted the last flight of stairs and entered their attic room, which was at once studio, sleeping, dining, and reception room. Beyond the easel, a small round table, and a couple of chairs, furniture there was none; while in the farthest, darkest corner, behind a curtain screen, faded indeed, but carefully patched and darned, there stood a miserable apology for a bed.

The husband sank into a chair, struggling hard to get his breath, the while he glanced round the sordid room as though in search of something, finally resting his eyes on a heap of dusty canvases with a gloomy, distraught air.

'No, not one: not a single picture left to sell. And old 'Tonelli has had them all. And oh! the money he has made! And now, he will not advance one solitary farthing more, though he knows our desperate need. If only we had twenty pounds!—But there, one might as well wish for twenty thousand!'

This he murmured while his wife paused as though half doubtful. She had gone to the cupboard, thinking to fetch the last drop of wine: but no, the bottle was dry; and she stood there, glancing round the bare room, absently twisting her wedding-ring—the last thing of value she possessed—round and round on her finger before suddenly she cried: 'Hush, dear!—here is 'Tonelli. I hear him coming up the stairs!'

. . . . . .

And sure enough, old 'Tonelli it was; the famous bric-a-brac and picture dealer from the piazza below.

Old 'Tonelli had just had an idea, an idea that promised money, else would he never have mounted so high.

Two hours before, in his dusky, overcrowded shop, he had been showing a wealthy customer round—one already well and favourably known to him, an American millionaire—who, seized by that *cacoethes carpendi*, that rage for collecting, was making a sort of royal progress through Italy, buying neither wisely perhaps, nor yet too well, whatever took his fancy at the time, for his new brown stone mansion facing Central Park.

Stopping before an easel half turned from the light, he had drawled: 'Say now, 'Tony, what have you here!' And he essayed to draw the picture round.

'Ah! signor, that is not to sell; that is but to clean and restore. The signor will permit me'—— And he wheeled the large studio easel where the light could fall full on the painting, then slipped aside as he added: 'Ah yes! but indeed that is not mine to sell. The more the pity. It is superb, magnificent! a genuine Andrea del Sarto—that!'

'Why, if I know anything about it, that is the smoke-dried affair they had hung over the altar at that little convent chapel away up on the hills.—But what have you done to it, eh?'

'Ah! yes, it is the same. The chapel is being restored, so why not the picture; therefore have they sent it to me.' And the old man carefully removed a speck of dust from the face with a dingy old silk rag.

'And a very tolerable restoration you have made—almost a renaissance, eh? When I saw that thing before, I would not have taken the dingy old panel at a gift: looked no better than a public-house sign; but now—why it's as fresh as—as paint.'

'Yes, signor, that is the perfection of my art, my secret; known only to myself. You talk about painting—pouf! You can find twenty of the artists to paint you such a picture as that, but where is the one to restore it, to bring back the first freshness, the bloom of its youth—but me.' And old 'Tonelli gazed proudly at his handiwork.

'M'yes, it does look something like a picture now; before, it might have been—— But who did you say was the artist, eh?'

'Andrea del Sarto, a most splendid example of his later style; painted from his wife, just before he died of the plague in fifteen hundred and'——

'H'm! She don't look much of a plague, though one never knows; but do you mean to say it is three hundred and fifty years old?'

'Yes, it was painted after he came back from France, when he'——

'Scooped the old French king's money; oh! that's all right! I remember now; read all about him in Baedeker, or Vasari, or one of those fellows. And it's a genuine specimen, eh?'

'Perfect, and perhaps the best he ever painted.'

'I never met an example that wasn't. Though now I come to think, I don't believe I've got a Del—Thingamy. Pity those old fellows all painted so much alike; shows a sad lack of invention—imagination. If I've bought one Virgin Mary since I came here, I've bought at least a dozen; and you can't tell one from the other. Still, if it's a genyooine Andrea del—yes, Sarto—why, I'm bound to have one, so I reckon we'd better trade. What's the figure, eh?'

'The figure, Holy Virgin! The figure is the blessed Madonna herself.'

'Oh! come, haven't I seen some thousands of her by this time! Must have been rather gone on having herself painted. But I mean the price.'

'Oh! signor, for the price. I told you the picture is not for sale.'

'Yes, I know you did, but that is a flam, of course; we know all about that. Don't you waste time trying to rig the market. See here, Tony, I'll tell you what I'll do. If that really is an undoubted Del What-you-may-call him? I'll give you two thousand five hundred dollars for it, down on the nail.'

'Ah! but indeed, signor, it is impossible!'

'What! Not enough? You extortionate old—— Say three thousand.—No? Great Scott! what an unconscionable—— Here, I'll make it three—five—and that is all I mean to go on that hand.'

'Ah! if only it were mine, but'——

'You stick to that, do you? But even if it belongs to those frowsy old nuns up there, why, four thousand dollars would build them a new chapel, and fresco it all the way round'——

'But not with Del Sartos; they would not part with this, their choicest treasure, for'——

'Double the money; come, what do you say?'

And at this offer the old man's hands were stretched out involuntarily, quivering with greed, while his voice sank to a plaintive whimper. 'Eight thousand dollars! Holy mother of Jesus! What a sum! And I cannot—— Ah! but what if I could!' And he stopped suddenly with his mouth agape, as an idea flashed across his subtle scheming brain.

'What! you are coming round? I thought that would fetch you. Say, now, is it a deal?' And the American took out his cheque-book and fluttered the leaves tantalisingly before the other's eager eyes, as he went on: 'Or must I cry off?'

'Eight thousand! Oh! if only I—— But there, signor, indeed it is not for sale; I swear it, by the picture itself, I'——

'I'll be shot if I don't think you are only bluffing, after all. But there, I'll go one better; I'll say nine thousand dollars, and nary another cent.'

He waited as the old dealer sank down into a carved oak chair that was fortunately near to receive him, and sat with his hands clutching at his hoary locks, while a curious look of illumination gradually stole into his eyes.

'So! that takes the trick, eh? I thought it would, but'——

'Ah! no, signor, not—not now.' And the old man pushed back the hand that was preparing to write out the cheque. 'Not now,' he repeated; 'but, if I *can*—find the way to'——

'Why, certainly; you'll work the oracle. I can see you mean business, by the way you eye the ticket; better let me make it out.' Here he approached the picture, and as though afraid lest he should walk off with it under his arm, the dealer cried out in an agitated voice, little more than a whisper: 'No, no; not now. I must have a little time to—to'——

'Oh! if there's any hocus-pocus to be done, why, I'm not having any. I'——

But old 'Tonelli had risen from his seat and walked away; and the American, with a queer look of comprehension as the dealer paced excitedly up and down the shop, quietly proceeded with a sharp penknife to cut an almost imperceptible mark at the right-hand lower corner of the back of the panel on which the picture was painted, before, as the other returned, he asked quietly: 'Wal, made up your mind to trade, eh? because if not, I'm off—I'——

'Yes, yes, signor, if it is at all possible; that is, if it can be—bought, I—but it will take time—a little time. Say in a week from now, I will undertake to deliver this most marvellous masterpiece, if'——

'Look here, 'Tony, I mean business, if you don't. Ten thousand dollars, and no more "if's,"' replied the bidder coolly.

'But yes, signor, and indeed it shall be done.'

And with that, after showing his customer to the door, the wily old fox came back and sat eyeing the picture closely with a curiously absorbed and attentive frown, before in the end he rose and repeated firmly: 'Ten thousand dollars! Body of Bacchus, it must and shall be done!'

AUCTIONS AND KNOCK-OUTS.

A GOOD deal of pretty and sentimental writing has at different times been indulged in on the subject of auctions. The pathetic spectacle afforded by the rude scattering of the Lares and Penates of many worthy but unfortunate families to the four corners of the world, or, to be more accurate, to the various brokers' shops of London, has often been held up to us as one eminently calculated to enlist our sympathies on behalf of those whom hard fate compels to relinquish their cherished possessions and valued relics, for the sake of the prosaic yet highly necessary purpose of paying their debts. And there is no doubt a great deal of sentiment and pathos, and even romance, to be evolved from the subject; yet one must not forget that, like everything else, it has two sides—that familiar to the outer public, and the other,. with which only those engaged in the business are acquainted.

An auctioneer is, legally, considered in the light of an agent between the public who wish to sell, and the larger public who buy, some whether they wish to or not. This definition, however, very inadequately defines his multifarious duties. Those who imagine that to sit in a species of pulpit, and perform mysterious manœuvres with an ivory hammer for a few hours, is the extent of his labour and responsibility, are vastly mistaken. It is not in the rostrum that he passes the most anxious moments. Selling has, by constant repetition, become mere child's-play to him, and he knocks down gems of art and bundles of old clothes with equal indifference. No, it is in the privacy of his office, when interviewing would-be vendors of valuable property, or, still worse, when the sale is an accomplished fact and he must endeavour to soften the dread tidings of a result far contrary to their hopes, that he passes through the most trying ordeal. Then it is that the sublime qualities of patience, meekness, and toleration are called into play. Then it is that he realises the sad truth of Carlyle's famous saying respecting the character of the majority of the British nation, for surely never was any man in any profession so worried and plagued by ignorance as he.

Strange as the assertion may appear, much of this is attributable to what, in the abstract, is a noble and praiseworthy sentiment—friendship. The people who come and drive the poor auctioneer almost distracted are usually the victims of injudicious advice on the part of friends. For instance, a lady bristling with importance desires to see the principal. She has an old picture to sell, that a friend has declared to be of considerable value, and having been recommended to Messrs Jones & Brown, she wishes for their advice on the subject of offering it for sale by auction. She would not like to give it away, although she has no particular use for it, and would prefer the money; but she understands that it is worth at least twenty pounds. Quite so; would the lady be good enough either to have the picture forwarded, or indicate where it may be seen, and Messrs Jones & Brown will be most happy to advise. Meanwhile, their terms for sale are ten per cent., five per cent. if bought in, and she can, of course, place such reserve on the work of art as she thinks fit. In due course the picture arrives (freight *un*paid), and proves to be a poor thing, value about thirty shillings for the sake of the frame. A few days pass and the owner calls again. In his most suave manner, our friend Mr Jones or Mr Brown endeavours to convey to the lady the intelligence. He does not plumply tell her the exact value he places on her masterpiece—the shock would be too great—but delicately hints that the estimate her friend has formed is somewhat excessive, that the subject is not of the kind then popular, and, in fact, any excuse which occurs to his ready wit. Well, what would Mr Jones advise? But Mr Jones desires to avoid any advising whatever. His firm will be happy to offer the painting on the usual terms if the proprietors will duly instruct them as to reserve price. And so eventually the lady leaves the picture for sale, and places on it a reserve of five pounds. Messrs Jones and Brown smile. Their commission is secure at any rate. The day of sale arrives, and the hapless canvas is duly bought in for twenty-five shillings. Early the next morning the office is again invaded by the lady, eager to learn the result. What! Bought in for twenty-five shillings! It is preposterous, infamous. The affair must have been mismanaged entirely. The firm's conduct ought to be shown up, and so on. Of course Mr Jones is extremely sorry, but it is just one of those chances which will occur in the sale-room. The painting had the best possible opportunity; had it been worth more, it would have doubtless brought it. Meanwhile the account stands at one shilling and threepence for commission, and two shillings for carriage, three shillings and threepence altogether. Would the lady take the picture away then, or should it be sent? All this talk and worry and indignation for fifteen pence! And the case is by no means singular or exaggerated.

It is indeed ludicrous to find what excessive values the general public will put on their possessions, particularly in the matter of works of art or virtu, books, curiosities, and so forth. It is impossible to convince them of their error, and even when the sale has proved that their estimate was altogether false, they will attribute the low price to bad cataloguing, mistaken description, or any cause save the true one. I remember a poor lady, far away in the country, writing to a London firm to say that, being anxious to complete the purchase of a small estate adjoining her own farm, she wished to dispose of a very rare and valuable old book in her possession. She gave the title, and had to be politely informed that the outside value of the precious tome was—five shillings! This case seems improbable, but it is absolutely true nevertheless.

A very curious feature of auction-room life is the system popularly known as the 'knock-out,' a conspiracy really to defeat the ends of the sale, rob the auctioneer of a share of his commission, and the owner of his profit. It is chiefly practised at what are technically known as 'out sales'—that is to say, auctions held at private houses in the suburbs or remote places; but the plan is largely adopted in London rooms, not as one would fancy by the smaller and more insignificant tradesmen, but also amongst the wealthier and important members of the 'second-hand' fraternity. Briefly, the arrangement is this. Certain dealers who are interested in particular lots in a sale, agree not to oppose each other in bidding, but to allow one or more of their circle to purchase these lots, subject of course to outside competition, at the lowest possible price. It thus happens that, the opposition of the best qualified judges being voluntarily withdrawn, the articles in question are knocked down at a very small sum. After the sale, the little gang of conspirators meet at some convenient place, and the property is subjected to a second auction, at which it probably attains its full price, the balance of difference between the sum actually paid and the second amount being divided between the members of the ring.

An example will explain more clearly. There are, we will suppose, in a certain sale, half-a-dozen 'lots' of choice old china. Four first-class dealers in this property attend the auction, call them A, B, C, and D. It is mutually arranged that A shall do the bidding, and the remaining three keep silent. We will suppose, with a view to simplicity, that each of these six lots is worth, to a dealer, four pounds; but as our four friends are probably the only persons in the room who could dispose of such property, and who understand its value, and as they refrain from competing, it is not at all surprising to find that the six lots are bought by A at the rate of ten shillings apiece. So much for the first stage in the plot. The sale being concluded, A, B, C, and D forgather at some obscure public-house where they can have the use of a private room, and then begins the second auction. Lot 1 is offered, and after some competition, is allotted to C for, let us say, three pounds ten shillings. He pays over this sum to A, who acts as auctioneer, and who, after deducting the ten shillings he has paid for the lot, proceeds to divide the balance of three pounds among the members of the party. Consequently, C gets his piece of china for three pounds ten, and fifteen shillings back into the bargain, while the others each receive a like amount. So with the next lot which D buys for more or less, as the case may be, and in fact the procedure as quoted may serve as an illustration of how the affair is conducted throughout.

It will be seen from this that quite a handsome little amount can be made without any risk or necessity for buying at all. Indeed, attached to every branch of the second-hand business there is a sort of 'ragged regiment,' consisting of broken-down dealers who have seen better days; younger men who, with a smattering of knowledge, act as jackals to lions of the trade; and still more disreputable and degraded creatures who eke out a miserable existence on charity and such pickings as they can make from the generosity of successful tradesmen. These men never attend the regular salerooms. They have no money, therefore cannot buy; in fact, to buy is far from their thoughts. They simply wait about at the 'out sales' for the sake of sharing in the 'dividend,' as the share resulting from the 'knock-out' is termed. The astonishing part is that the big men of the trade not only tolerate them, but actually allow them to participate to some extent in the profits of the day. Not that they take any active part in the proceedings. Many of them indeed never even trouble to inspect the property on which their remuneration depends. Why, then, it may be asked, should established tradesmen with money in their pockets, who really desire to buy, to the best advantage of course, admit to their little conspiracy such worthless individuals as are described? Well, the more respectable are tolerated, because, although they may not have the means of purchasing, they possess what in such business is almost as important as money, namely knowledge, which would enable them to run up the prices to such an extent as to seriously diminish the 'dividend.' As for the others, their claim is chiefly on the compassion, not the cupidity of the clique. They are allowed to make a few shillings for nothing, purely for the sake of old times, or perhaps also with some little regard to the faint possibility of future service. It must not, however, be supposed that the outsiders here described share to the full extent in the profits of the conspiracy. At these out sales it is usual to have two and even three 'settlements,' the first embracing all members of the trade from highest to lowest, the second excluding those of lesser importance, and the third confined to those who, from the fact of their holding the most money, manage, as is usually the case, to make that most more. These few favoured ones it is who not only acquire the choicest items of the sale, but pocket also the biggest share in the nefariously procured profit.

A fertile source of remuneration to the 'ring' is the rich customer who gives commissions to the dealers. Let it be well understood here that, as in everything else, there are honourable exceptions to a fairly general rule. There are plenty of upright tradesmen in all branches of business who will execute orders at auction-sales honestly and to their customers' advantage. There are, on the other hand, many cases such as this. A wealthy collector named, we will say, Brown, sees in an auctioneer's catalogue a rare engraving or some curiosity which he much desires to possess. Money being no object, he tells Smith the dealer to buy it for him, and, if necessary, to go up to fifty pounds. Now, if Smith were to execute this commission in a straightforward manner, presuming he had to give the full limit of fifty pounds, and that his commission were ten per cent., he would receive five pounds for his trouble. But he sees a way by which he may not only pocket considerably more, but also oblige one or two friends who, at some other time, will return the compliment. Consequently, he informs the three other dealers likely to oppose him that he has a good commission for this particular print; they agree to refrain from bidding, with the result that Smith purchases the lot for five pounds instead of fifty. He takes care to charge his customer the latter amount, and the balance of forty-five pounds is shared amongst the four, while Smith very likely gets his five pounds commission into the bargain. But, it may be asked, suppose the purchaser finds out that the lot only brought five pounds? Why, then, Smith has a ready and genuine explanation to the effect that he was obliged to make an 'arrangement' with other members of the trade, or he would not have procured the gem at all. As a matter of fact, in such a case as this, the individual who gives the order to buy is the least aggrieved of the parties concerned. He was willing to pay fifty pounds to gratify his tastes, consequently has no cause to complain if called upon to write a cheque for that sum. It is the owner who only gets five pounds instead of fifty, and the auctioneer mulcted of his commission, who are really the injured persons.

The query not unnaturally arises, cannot steps be taken to prevent such proceedings? Well, it is a very vexed and difficult question. If certain men choose to remain silent in the auction-room, you cannot very well compel them to bid; and as the rules say, 'the highest bidder to be the purchaser,' there is no help but to knock the lots down, ridiculous as the price offered may be. The only way of effectually checking these conspiracies would seem to be by attacking the decidedly illegal auction at which the goods are subsequently disposed of; but if any steps were taken in this direction, it is highly probable that the astute tradesmen would devise some scheme to legalise their proceedings, by taking out an auctioneer's license for one of their number, for instance.

There seems to be no remedy for the state of affairs at present existing, and intending vendors should remember to protect themselves by always placing a reserve on their property, being also careful to limit their ideas of value as much as possible.

HIS ADVOCATE.

By George G. Farquhar.

What formed the ostensible pretext for the quarrel is matter about which none care to burden their memories at this late date. Outside any doubt, it had concern with something trivial and foolish enough in itself; but the breath of ruthless war was in the nostrils of the angry brawlers, and the heat of their tongues waxed fierce above any petty warranty. The muster of weather-bronzed fishermen stood placidly at audience, bearing no share in the ado, yet far more keenly expectant of its issue than their stoical demeanour would seem to declare. For they knew the real secret of the jangle now going forward—the true, deep origin of the bitterness, the fume, the fury, with which the two young smacksmen jerked out their venomed words. Ha! was there not a maid in it? Yes, they knew; and they possessed themselves in patience for the end of it all.

Broad, upstanding fellows they were, these wranglers, with cheeks tanned nigh to the hue of their boat-sails, stalwart of frame, with thews of steel. As they fronted each other there—their brown necks bare, their hats thrust awry upon their foreheads; their faces sullen with truculence and spite—it might readily be conceded that, for strength and mettle, few men in Port St Bede could boast themselves the match of either Oliver Hird or David Brogden. Of the two, perhaps Dave was actually the more incensed, for whereas Oliver but took on a fearless and contemptuous air, Dave's rugged face became distorted with passion; his brows knotted in a heavy scowl; his long narrow teeth, prominent at all times, now set forth in an ugly snarl at once menacing and repulsive. And the beholders understood that the baring of Dave's gums boded rough weather ahead for somebody. Ere long this forecast was put to the touch of proof, the storm bursting suddenly in a thunderclap.

'Hark to him, mates!' Dave cried, glancing sharply round, his voice shrill with rage. 'Hark to him now! Did ye ever hear o' 't? Losh, but he's a liar! He's got his tongue twined roun' a dumb lie now, I tell ye!'

The accusation had found utterance; to the minds of the fisher-folk there was but one mode of adjustment when disputes came to this pass.

'Eh, Noah,' chirruped old Yardes, taking the cutty from his lips. 'Did ye hear that? Wah, he gi'es Oliver the lie, mon!'

'Oh, ay,' replied Noah Masker grimly. 'It can't stop at that. One of 'em's got to be paid for 't.'

In the hush that had fallen upon the group—a silence only broken by the lapping of the waves upon the boat-shore—this whispered aside carried far and distinctly. Dave caught at the suggestion greedily.

'Let him break his teeth ower that,' cried he again. 'A lie—a flamin' lie!'

For a moment it seemed as if Oliver would accept the challenge; he stepped forward a pace, his eyes flashing, his nieves clenched. Then he fell back, controlling himself with difficulty, and wheeled about as if to leave the spot.

'Nay, never, Oliver—never!' exclaimed half-a-dozen disgusted onlookers. 'Thee's never goin' to take that fro' him 'bout a word!'

'Deed, but he'll stan' it quiet enow,' put in Dave sneeringly. 'A liar, I says, an' a coward forbye. See ye here!'

With that he strode hastily forward, swung round his arm, and brought the flat of his circling palm full thwack against the left ear of his rival. For a second's space the marks of the impact hung white upon Oliver's ruddy skin; then his mouth tightened, and a heady rush of blood turned his cheeks to a dull scarlet.

'Ye shall ha'e your will,' said he, in low swift accents. 'I'll fight ye, man—ay, I'll fight ye now!'

A murmur of approval welcomed this note of defiance, and as the combatants stripped for the trial, the throng of bystanders ranged backward, eager to grant free ring and no favour. The sooner the bout was decided the better; and, in their view, it could be settled honourably and finally in no other fashion.

The antagonists stood on guard, their brawny arms stretched out, stern, dogged, vengeful. Warily they eyed each other, on the alert for an opening. At length Dave drove out his great fist, Oliver warding the blow with his right forearm, and returning it furiously upon the other's mouth. The savage buffet stung Dave to madness; it stirred the devil in him. With intent to bring his weight to bear, he lowered his head and rushed afresh upon Oliver, enfolding him in a vice-like hug that knew no relaxing. This way and that they lurched, with interwrought limbs, the pebbles cracking and flying from beneath their heavy sea-boots, their husky gasps forced from them like jets of escaping steam. Down they pitched at last in a struggling heap, rolling and writhing together on the shingle with the frenzy of maniacs.

Suddenly there came a diversion.

'Hoot—tuts; we'll hae none o' that,' ejaculated Tony Yardes, breaking from his place in the ring. 'See ye, lads, see ye at them great teeth o' Dave's?'

As a matter of fact the said teeth could not be seen at all, for they were fixed deep in the fleshy part of Oliver's left hand.

'Nay, nay; we don't hold wi' sich-like,' added Noah authoritatively. 'Fair fight we'll no interfere wi', but we'll stan' no cannibalism i' Port St Bede.'

The belligerents were dragged apart, their cut and bruised visages running blood and sweat adown grimy furrows. A precious couple, in all conscience!

Before this, however, the prolonged hubbub near the boats had drawn the regard and curiosity of the shore-biding folk, many of whom, men, women, and youngsters, set off hot-foot to learn the significance of the unwonted brabble. Among the foremost to reach the boats was she on whose account this battle-royal was being waged—Joan, the daughter of 'Ringie' Verity, the cobbler. A jaunty, well-favoured lass she looked in her short merino skirt, blue woollen stockings, and striped bodice—a real bargain, assuredly, at the price of a mere scratch or two. Except for the faint flush that mantled her cheeks when she saw who the combatants were, she evinced no marked interest in what was afoot, but stood on the fringe of the crowd, unremarked, and apparently indifferent. Why should she disquiet herself? In her experience two men never yet laid claim to one woman without the affair being put to the test of the strong arm. This was the spirit of justice which imbued the fathers; this the spirit which imbued sons and daughters—an atavism, a survival of primitive conscience and conduct. Besides, Joan had perfect faith in the merits of her 'man.' No, there was no call for her to interpose.

But when she heard Tony's shrill cry of indignation, and saw Oliver's gashed hand, and the blood still hanging upon the lips of his enemy, she broke abruptly into the arena—her dark eyes scintillating with new-born fire.

'Shame o' ye!' she exclaimed, confronting Dave with scornful mien. 'Shame o' ye for't, Dave Brogden!'

'Nay, nay, Joan,' Oliver put in, sheepishly. 'There's a pair o' us. I dunno but what I'm more i' fault nor'——

'Not ye, Oliver. I've heard him threat ye many's the time. Ay, to my face he's threat ye oft. I'd no fear o' which had been t' likelier lad if t' feight had been up an' honest. He's a foul man to do sich wark as this. Gowf, but I'll ha'e nowt but cross talk for him long's I live—never, never! Get ye goan, Dave Brogden—get ye goan!'

While this reproof was in the making, Dave had donned his coat and hat without once lifting his eyes to hers; but at the final outburst he pulled himself straight again.

'Joan,' he said, and his voice quavered out of control. 'I can't speak to ye; ye're a woman. An' forbye that, ye know—how I—how I—— 'Deed, I'll be steppin' now, as ye say. But I ha'e no' done wi' him yet—soul o' me, no! I ha'e no' done wi' him yet!'

Swinging round, he slunk dourly away. The neighbours straggled in his wake, all gabble and chat, tearing the rights and wrongs of the quarrel to rags as they went.

Ten days later, Dave was seized with a quaking dread lest he should be balked of his revenge for all time. The gaunt spectre of Death bade fair to forestall him. Oliver's younger brother had but just escaped from the grip of the disease when Oliver himself was stricken low with diphtheria. Good Dr Marshall's intermitted visits were at once resumed, yet it would seem with less happy results than heretofore. The dire contagion had taken fast hold, and the poor fellow's strength was waning day by day. Although the doctor strove to appear hopeful, his heart was assailed with misgivings.

And outside the house, be the weather what it may, to and fro upon the narrow side-walk prowled the sullen-eyed Dave, restless, implacable, hovering like an insatiate ghoul about the dwelling. He was not to be choused out of all the joys of vengeance, even though he could not compass it with his own hands.. Yes, his would be the triumph after all, his the last, longest, and heartiest laugh. Oh, but it was fine to loiter there, with quickened ears listening for the querulous plaints and fevered agonies; almost seeing the frantic fight for air, the painful ebbing away of life. Oh, but it was grand to call up the things now passing within those four walls—well-nigh as sweet as if his own fingers were nipping the windpipe. One thing only damped Dave's satisfaction. Joan had constituted herself joint-nurse with Oliver's mother; day in, day out, she was ever there—anxious, tearful, loving soul. Dr Marshall gave it as his opinion—the very morning on which he had consulted with the great surgeon from Morperland, when a tracheotomy-tube was inserted in the patient's throat—that if watchful nursing could win back vitality, Oliver was in no danger. Ah, but nursing could not do that—always. No, no; Oliver would die—he *must* die. And afterwards, although Joan might perhaps cry and fret a while, in the end she would dry her eyes, smile, and look about her again. Yes, being a woman, she would do that in the end.

On the first day after the operation, towards dusk, when Dave was of a mind to abandon his ghastly patrol for the nonce and hie homeward for a meal, an orphan cousin of the sick man dashed, hatless and affrighted, from the house.

'Heigh, Tom o' Ezra's,' shouted Dave, as the boy sped past. 'What's amiss? Wheer's thee boun' i' such a flurry?'

'For t' doctor. Oliver's worse—vastly worse!'

'Oh, ay. 'Deed, is he?'

Presently the lad came back, tearing down the cobbled street at a breakneck pace.

'Dr Marshall's no' at home. He's goan ower to Wayne's farm, i' t' Hollow, to 'tend Mrs Wayne. Whatever's to be done?'

Evidently he expected no reply, for he did not halt, but bolted straight into the cottage. Following him, Dave likewise stepped over the door-stone into the kitchen, where Oliver's father had been awaiting his nephew's return.

'Oh dear, deary me!' moaned the old man, when Tom had told him of the doctor's absence. 'I'm feared—I'm sore feared! Ay, but thee send across to t' "Trawlers," Tom, an' ask for t' loan o' Joe Morphey's galloway. Stir thee, now! Ride ower to t' farm, an' let t' doctor gallop here o' pony back. Mebbe he'll be i' time—mebbe—mebbe. Dear, oh deary me!'

Away the lad scurried once more, his uncle and Dave being left standing there, on the flagged and sanded floor of the living-room.

'It's real good o' ye to call, Dave,' murmured Oliver's father, misjudging the visitor's motives. 'I've catched glint o' ye, off an' on, these two-three days back. It shows a reight feeling after what's come 'tween you an' Oliver; he'd 'a' fain seen ye if ye'd but come forward—'deed, he would. An' now I doubt he's too far gane to know ye. Ah, he's badly this day—reight poorly is he. But it'll mebbe be t' last chance—good sakes, I hope no'; but mebbe 'twill—an' if ye've no fear o' being smittled, an' would like to see him, well then, just ye step up aboon wi' me.'

His grizzled head bowed in dole, old Hird unhasped the door in the corner, whence the stairs led up to the bedrooms. The hysterical sobs and lamentations of Oliver's mother struck upon their ears as they ascended.

'T' missus takes on sadly ower it all,' said Hird, in a strained undertone. 'She's driven fair crazed wi' cark an' grievin'. I'll e'en get her to come away for a bit o' rest, poor body; she'd be the better for't, I'm thinkin'. Bide ye here a minute, Dave.'

After some audible demur, Oliver's mother, clinging to the arm of her guidman, tottered wearily out of the sick-chamber.

'Now ye go in,' whispered her husband, as they passed. 'There's but him an' Joan. Go ye reight in.'

A candle was burning in a flat tin sconce over the chest of drawers; a blue pitcher filled with wall-flowers, sweet-williams and 'stortiums,' taken from the front garden-patch, stood on the ledge below the latticed window. Near the head of the bed, which had been dragged out from the wall, sat Joan—pale, stolid, and apathetic. She looked up when Dave entered, but made no sign and spoke no word, turning her gaze instantly back upon the unconscious form of him whose struggle was with Death.

Nor did Dave attempt to loosen his tongue. He drew up at the bed-foot, twiddling his hat by its rim, swaying the weight of his body, first to one leg, then to the other, yet making no move to quit the room. Truth to tell, he had no such immediate intention. He was there to feast his eyes, and he meant to surfeit them ere he went.

Not long had he to wait for a foretaste of the wild pleasure he promised himself. A convulsive paroxysm shook Oliver like a pennon; his arms tossed backwards and forwards over the coverlet; he gurgled and choked as if he would never more regain his breath. When, in some degree, the seizure had passed off, it left him weak and exhausted, his respiration confined to a series of hard, stridulous gasps that betokened the inevitable end. Minutes were now the measure of his life's span.

And Dave was well contented that it should be so; his narrowed eyes beamed out the satisfaction he felt. Let the doctor come when he pleased now, he would be too late. A mile and a half to Wayne's farm—a mile and a half back! Ah, that was a rare distance, and a horse can't fly. Dave hugged himself at the humour of the notion. Things were shaping well for him—particular well!

In the meantime Joan had risen from her seat and tenderly moistened the parched lips of the sufferer. Then she performed an act which, coming all unexpectedly, struck Dave with amaze and awe. Clasping her hands, the sickly candle-flare lighting her white, uplifted countenance, she sunk on her knees by the bedside.

'Oh, Heavenly Father, have pity on him; have pity on them he is dear to, an' on them he loves. What can he 'a' done deserving so great pain an' punishment? He's the best—the truest—— Oh, God, look down i' mercy on this drearful house, an' spare Oliver for the sake o' them his death will kill. They won't want to live if he's ta'en away. Be merciful—be merciful! Don't let him die! Oh, Lord Jesus, don't—don't let him die!'

In the midst of this wailing appeal, there sounded the rattle of the street-door latch, mingled with the shuffle of slippered feet as old Hird hastened down-stairs to meet the doctor. Apparently, neither Joan nor Dave had heard the outside clatter. The girl's supplication went on unchecked, and Dave still regarded her in curious bewilderment. Her fervour moved him strangely.

'Losh, I can't thole this,' he growled under his breath. 'Like enow, it'll be t' same. Anyways I've a mind to try it. Yes, I'll do't—I'll do't!'

Swiftly he crept to the head of the bed, opposite to where Joan knelt; stooping suddenly, he thrust his face deep down under Oliver's chin. There followed a fierce incatch of his breath, a hollowing of his lean cheeks, and he stood upright again, spluttering blood from his mouth.

Joan sprang up, her eyes outstanding in horror. The deed reminded her hideously of one she had seen Dave perpetrate not many days before. Those great teeth had haunted her dreams ever since. Now, heedless of the presence of Dr Marshall and Oliver's father, who had both entered the room in time to witness Dave's proceedings, she burst out into angry revilings.

'Oh—oh! You black savage—you foul, mad devil'——

'No, no,' interposed the doctor suavely. 'You mistake the lad's object. Look!' pointing to his patient. 'Look! he breathes more freely already.'

It was true. Oliver's breathing was decidedly less laboured and stertorous; the leaden colour, too, was fast fading from his face.

'It was the only thing to do,' added Dr Marshall. 'The membranous growth all but blocked the air-channel, and the obstruction had to be removed somehow to avoid suffocation. I should have had to resort to suction myself—not, however, by means of the mouth. That rough-and-ready method is extremely dangerous and reprehensible. Umph! But I am forgetting myself. Here, my good man, rinse your mouth out at once—thoroughly, mind you, thoroughly. You're a brave fellow, indisputably, with more sense than most.'

'Faith, then, I'm no' claimin' it,' returned Dave glumly. 'I saw t' doctor do that, ower at Morperlan', when my sister's youngest was down wi' diphthery.'

'Ah, yes; I recollect the case. Poor Wharton! He contracted the disease, I believe, and died. Yes—yes. Extremely risky business—extremely so! Now, as to our patient here. We must keep up his strength, and he will pull through all right now—yes, he will pull through'——

Dave picked up his hat from the carpet, where it had fallen.

'We'll see ye again, by-an'-by, Dave?' exclaimed old Hird, gratitude in his tones. 'Ye'll call in i' t' morn, mebbe, all bein' well?'

'Nay; I'm boun' to Morperlan' first thing. I've shipped as mate o' the *Swallow*, an' she sails wi' t' tide to-morn 't' neet. Port St Bede 'll see nowt o' me fro' this day on.'

He turned towards the door.

'Dave,' murmured Joan softly, 'I'm grieved—sore grieved ower what I said to ye but now.'

'Oh, ay, lass; ne'er dwell on 't. I couldn' bide to see ye fret so, an' no' help ye when I could.' With a quick, impatient gesture, he added: 'But ye're all wrang i' your notions. I did nowt for *him*—nor wouldn'. I'd ha'e watched him choke there wi' gladness i' my heart, for I hated him—ay, I hate him now! 'Twas no' to ease his pain. Eeh, no! But 'twas just for pity o' thee, Joan—'twas just to comfort thee!'

VANISHED GOLD MINES.

An interesting chapter in the history of gold and silver mining which still remains to be written is that relating to lost mines—that is, mines of fabulous richness, once discovered by some lonely prospector, and then lost by some fateful incident or chain of accidents. In every gold and silver bearing district stories of these marvellous 'finds' are current, and West Australia, the latest gold-field of all, is not without its crop. There is no inherent improbability about the better-known mine myths, if we may so term them, because in a wild country where there are practically no landmarks, it is by no means a difficult matter for an uneducated man, with his tremendous secret to keep, to make a mistake as to his location. Besides, the happy discoverer may die on or near the spot where he struck his bonanza, and his fate remain unknown even after his bleached bones have been found in the wilderness years after. Or again, like Amos Albright, he may die after imparting his secret to his dear ones on his death-bed; and from an inaccurate or insufficient description, they may never be able to reach the mine and avail themselves of the riches there hidden.

The Rocky Mountains and the Sierras are especially rich in mythical mines, and any man who may find himself in one of the many camps still to be met with in those wild, and for the most part untrodden regions, will be regaled at the saloon bar with enough stories to fill a book. The 'Lost Cabin' mine is a good specimen of the kind of thing we have in mind. One day, forty years ago, three men named 'Kit' Carson, James Kinney, and a half-breed Blackfoot came into Fort Randal, on the Missouri River, with a bagful of nuggets and a story of gold deposits of incredible richness in Cabin Creek, a branch of the north fork of the Cheyenne River, just west of what is now the Montana boundary line. Both were old mountain men, and Carson enjoyed a great reputation as a guide; which lent some additional colour to the story. Everybody went crazy. No white man was supposed to have been within five hundred miles of the place, and indeed men were (at that time) being cut off by Indians within five miles of the fort. Carson and Kinney went on a week's 'spree,' and soon gambled away their gold, but showed no disposition to take a party to the new Eldorado. The United States officers at the fort discredited the whole thing, and dissuaded the crowd from following it up; but men started out, and none returned. Presumably, the Indians saw the last of them. The red-skins, no doubt, knew of the existence of gold there, and of course wanted for several reasons to keep the whites out, and they did effectually for thirty years. A thousand lives and a mountain of treasure were spent in seeking for the Lost Cabin, but in vain; and it was only quite recently that other gold discoveries were made along the same creek. In the light of this fact, were the men lying? If they were, how did they become possessed of such a treasure as they unquestionably had with them?

The story of the lost 'Lake of the Golden Bar' in Alaska is one of the strangest ever narrated. There is an expedition even now on foot to look for it. In August 1884, three adventurers, named Hamilton Galt, Charles Ulrich, and Walter Stanford, went tramping north from Butte, Montana, and at the end of eight weeks found themselves near the Yukon River, on the eastern slope of the St Elias Range in Alaska. There were well-watered valleys, where game was abundant, and traces of gold were found everywhere on the 'bars' and shores of the streams. The sun was shining gloriously, when suddenly a small lake came into view. In the words of Galt himself: 'Its rays struck with a slanting flood upon the bar, and scintillated in a thousand golden slivers directly across the water into the dazzled eyes of the thunder-struck men.' There were bad Indians roaming round, but what cared they now? All three yelled with delirium. They threw down their rifles and swam for the bar—a small island in the lake, thirty feet from the bank. The first nugget weighed six pounds, and was almost pure gold This was Galt's catch. Stanford, whose nickname was 'Ole,' gathered up nuggets and scooped up 'dust' as fast as he could transfer the stuff from the ground to his pockets. But it remained for Ulrich to make the biggest 'find.' He had landed a little lower down. In walking through the shallows towards the shore, he struck his foot against a sharp rock, as he thought. But as he lifted it out of the water, there was disclosed a nugget of almost pure gold, estimated at fifty pounds, or not much less than that figure in weight.

For forty days these men worked as no coal-heaver in the world ever worked, and 'cached' gold valued at about ten thousand pounds sterling, in addition to the two nuggets found on the first landing. They experienced great difficulty in ferrying it across the water between the bar and the shore, and this occupied much of their time, and prevented them from gathering more gold. Besides, they needed food, and hunting claimed a goodly part of their time. They took turns at providing food for the camp. Their idea was to gather enough gold in the cache to make them all rich, before the actual cold weather set in, and then to go south and to return again with a proper equipment. Just as preparations had been made for this move, a large body of Indians attacked the 'prospectors,' killed 'Ole,' and burned their hut; the two others got separated, and had to leave most of their treasure behind them and pick their way south as best they could. Ulrich, it turned out afterwards, contrived to reach Fort Wrangel penniless. Galt, who was afraid to go near the camp because of the Indians, kept in the neighbourhood for two days, and then commenced his lonely tramp back. There was no sun to point him right. The long winter nights had commenced. It became colder and colder: the thermometer ranged far below zero. Snow came in masses and blinding blizzards. 'I wandered on and on,' he says, 'always with the instinct of self-preservation strong within me. I never thought of giving up. Hunger, cold, snow, ice, fever, delirium—nothing mattered; but life—sweet life. I went on this way for weeks. Through that terrible winter of 1884 I wandered in that awful wilderness.' Paralysed, bleeding from wounds on the body, head, and face, frozen, the sight of one eye nearly gone, attenuated to the mere shadow of a man, he at last came to a human habitation on March 25, 1885, about twenty miles from 'Bonner's Ferry.'

The latter part of this story sounds rather weak, but it is certain that Galt had one thousand pounds' worth of gold in his belt when he came to 'Jim' Edwards' place at Bonner's Ferry, and he is going again to the 'Lost Bar' lake to find the gold which is his and Ulrich's. It is pretty generally believed, apart from this particular case, that Alaska is simply teeming with gold, and the United States Government has within the past year despatched a scientific expedition to gauge the extent of the mineral wealth of this far-off and much neglected possession.

The story of the 'White Cement' mine is a curious one. One day a gold-seeker named White came into Horse Head Gulch, California, from Northern New Mexico, and took out of his pack a number of pieces of what looked like hard white clay glittering with specks of metal. Before night it was known in the camp that White's specimens showed one thousand ounces to the ton. The excitement was intense. In the morning a party called on the owner of the specimens, and told him that he must pilot the men to his find. He should have the pick of the claims, and help to work it, but go he must; and on his refusal, was warned that his life would not be worth shucks if he 'stood off' the camp. Then he consented. The trail went down and across the Rockies. It led along rocky trails, up and down canyons, and across mountain crests. On the evening of the third day White said the miners were near to their journey's end. Every one lay down that night expecting to arise a millionaire. In the morning, White was gone, and had left no trace. One-half of the party, after incredible suffering, got back to life and civilisation; and yet, despite their story, one hundred men started back over their trail two days later. Three years after, White reappeared in Salt Lake City with his cement specimens as before, incredibly rich, and again disappeared, and from that time to this, has never been heard of. But men still wear out their lives in seeking this 'Lost Cement' mine.

For many years there has been a legend prevalent in Port Hickson and in the country round about it, that somewhere in the Shawangunk Mountains in that vicinity there is a cave or mine containing deposits of wealth in gold and silver; and in spite of long, tedious, and unprofitable searches that have from time to time been made, there are still scores of people who believe fondly in its existence.

The legend of the hidden treasure is, in effect, that years ago—nobody knows how many—an old Spaniard or an Indian lived somewhere in the Shawangunk Mountains near Port Hickson. This person went by the name of Ninety-nine. Why Ninety-nine, the misty record does not pause to say. But of this thing the legend is positive: Ninety-nine was overpartial to whisky, and it was his favourite pastime when he was drunk to scatter gold pieces about the settlements, to pull a handful of diamonds from one pocket, and a string of pearls from another, and from other parts of his opulent person clusters of rubies and glittering lots of other precious stones, and parade about among the Dutch settlers an animate and inebriate Golconda. No one could ever find where Ninety-nine lived. He never permitted any one to accompany him from the settlements except once, and that was a short time before he disappeared for ever from those merry scenes. The exception was a boy named Benny Depew, and it was when he was in his cups that Ninety-nine took him blindfolded to the mountain and showed him over his treasure-house. Heaped in glittering confusion on the floor were bars of gold and silver, and domes of coin. From every side resplendent jewels glared at him with myriad eyes of fire, while Ninety-nine thrust his hand into a cask, and taking it out and holding it above his head, released what he held within it. A stream of flaming diamonds fell back into the cask. These were some of the things that Benny said he gazed upon in Ninety-nine's cave. But the greedy custodian of all that fabulous wealth permitted him to feast his eyes but a short time. Then he blindfolded Benny again and led him away. When the bandage was a second time removed from his eyes, Benny was standing on the top of one of the highest peaks of the Shawangunk overlooking the Mamakating Valley. Ninety-nine was gone. And he was never seen again. This story has an unmistakable suggestion of the Arabian Nights, but only a few years ago a company was formed with a capital of $25,000 to search for the lost treasure. Half the capital was paid up. However, the only exhaustive work done was by the treasurer of the company. He did it on the company's treasury. When his work was done, the treasury was exhausted of the $12,500, and he had gone somewhere. The company turned its attention away from hunting for the lost cave, and went to hunting for the lost treasurer.

The 'Peg Leg' mine in Southern California is the one that has been most sought after. A gold-miner, John G. Smith, known as 'Peg Leg' because of his wooden leg, came into Los Angeles one day in July 1871 with his mules laden with several sacks of gold ore. The rock was assayed by mining experts in the place, and the news quickly spread that Smith had ore that ranged in value from $450 to $800 a ton. It was several weeks before Smith could be induced to say a word about where he got his ore. When at last he did open his mouth he refused to say anything more than that it was down across the Colorado desert in the mountain-range in San Diego county, and that until he knew whether this mine was located in the United States or Mexico, he must keep the rest a strict secret to himself. He said that he had spent five months in the locality of this mine with two half-breed Pima Indians, who had guided him there in payment for his kindness rendered to them in serious illness. He told again and again, and always with rare exactness of detail, the surface indications of his mine, the direction and slant of the gold-bearing ledges, the surrounding geological and mineral conditions and characteristics, and the work he and his Indian assistants had done in determining the quantity of the ore.

One fine day Smith disappeared from Los Angeles, and news came across the country a week or two later from San Bernardino that he had been there and hastily and secretly 'fitted out' for a camp of several months in the mountains and a mule ride across the desert. He had, at the last moment, taken two old mining chums with him and set out in the night. Several years later, dried and mummy-like remains of the two men who accompanied the old man, and the skeletons of the mules and remains of their wagon and mining-tools, were found one hundred miles out on the Colorado desert, but not one trace of Peg Leg. It is improbable that he could have escaped from that spot in the desert on foot.

AFTER MANY YEARS.

Throw wide the window; let us stand
And listen to the Christmas chimes,
Which rain glad music o'er the land,
As in the old dear bygone times,
While life was young, and hope was new,
And we two dreamt sweet dreams together,
And thought that summer breezes blew,
Although 'twas wintry weather.

The path that winds across the moor
Is white with crisp and glistening snow—
The path that led me to your door
One golden Yule-tide long ago;
When, by the glossy holly tree,
Where knots of coral berries shone,
With many a softly uttered plea
I won you for my own.

Now, Time, which shows but little care
For maiden charm or manly grace,
Has left its silver on your hair,
Its tell-tale furrows on my face;
And down the pleasant moorland way,
Amidst the joy-bells' merry din,
Our laughing children trooped to-day
To bring the Yule-log in.

Sweet wife, uplift your eyes to mine!
And tell me—are you happy still?
My heart has aye been true to thine,
Through all life's mingled good and ill:
And in this memory-haunted room,
Our merry tribe about my knee,
I vow the years have held no gloom
Since you kept house with me.

E. Matheson.

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'THE LYON IN MOURNING;'

OR REMINISCENCES OF THE '45.

The brilliant, if futile, effort of Prince Charles Edward Stewart to recover the throne of his fathers has a perennial fascination for lovers of the romantic, and of late there has been quite a recrudescence of interest in 'the '45,' the last of the Stewart Rebellions. It is even whispered, forsooth, that Jacobitism is not really dead, but that 'honest men' are again coming to the front; in proof of which it is pointed out that they can now afford to have their own serial magazine and annual. Certain it is that the incidents of 'the '45' have recently been the theme of much public attention, perhaps owing to the fact that the present year is the ter-jubilee of the unforgetable heroic year. Has there not been a pilgrimage to Glenfinnan to commemorate the raising of the standard? And now we read that the memory of the faithful Flora Macdonald is to be perpetuated by the erection of her statue in the Highland metropolis.

By the fortuitous concourse of circumstances evidently—for there is no conscious appearance of design—the Scottish History Society marks this same year by the issue of what may justly be called, after the French style, Memoirs to serve for the History of the Rebellion of 1745. *The Lyon in Mourning*, edited by Henry Paton, M.A., two of the three volumes of which have just been placed in the hands of the members, is, however, but one of a series of works dealing with the same event of Scottish history which it is providing. But a year or two since, *A List of Persons concerned in the Rebellion of 1745* was presented as the gift of Lord Rosebery to the society. More recently a few additional papers were inserted in its first miscellany volume, and now we have *The Lyon*. Then, on the completion of *The Lyon*, we are promised (1) the 'Journals of John Murray of Broughton,' who acted as secretary to the Prince, and took an active part in all the negotiations and plots anterior to the actual outbreak of the Rebellion; (2) a 'Selection of the Forfeited Estates Papers,' which are preserved in the General Register House, and which deal with the properties of those who 'went out' with the Prince; and (3) another work which, though not immediately concerned with the '45, has yet a decided bearing upon it—namely, 'The Letter Book of James, second Earl of Ormond,' which illustrates the Jacobite rising of 1719. So that upon this period the Scottish History Society will, in course of time, have thrown much additional light from both sides, and will for this, among other services, merit the gratitude of historical students. And perhaps Lord Rosebery was right in saying at the annual meeting of the society, that if in the nine or ten years of its existence it had done nothing more than reprint *The Lyon in Mourning*, it would have fully justified its existence. Meanwhile the demand for the volume, of which fewer than five hundred copies were printed, has been greater than for any one of the series hitherto, a demand, however, which cannot be supplied, as the book is only printed for members of the society.

The Lyon in Mourning is a most interesting and entertaining collection of stories and narratives about Prince Charles, which begin with his leaving France in the disguise of a student of the Scots College in Paris, carry us along with him during his conduct of the Rebellion in Scotland, but deal especially with his adventures after the battle of Culloden. These are thrilling enough, and they are graphically told. They literally bristle with marvellous escapes, both from the elements and his pursuers, who, animated by the hope of earning the large reward of £30,000 sterling offered for his apprehension, dead or alive, relentlessly followed their prey. They tell of his astonishing pluck and endurance in the midst of all his dangers and privations; and then, after his escape abroad, they continue to inform us about the Prince, for his fortunes are still watched over and chronicled in *The Lyon.* Of these narratives and stories one peculiar interest is that they were obtained for the most part at first hand, from the very persons themselves who were present and participators in the events they narrate; frequently several such persons contributed each an independent account of what took place during his or her attendance on the Prince. In fact, nearly every person who had direct communication with the Prince, especially in his wanderings after Culloden, all his guides and companions among the islands and hills, have been, as it were, seized and brought forward to relate what the Prince was about when in their company, and also to make known their own and others' share in securing his safety.

The collection was the work of the Rev. Robert Forbes, a clergyman of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, who became in 1762 Bishop of Ross and Caithness. The son of Charles Forbes, schoolmaster of Rayne in Aberdeenshire, the bishop was born in the beginning of May 1708, studied at Marischal College, Aberdeen, and in 1735 became incumbent of the Episcopal congregation at Leith. As a rule, the Scottish Episcopalians were attached to the Stewart cause, and when the Rebellion broke out, all of them who could, flocked to render assistance. Bishop Forbes was no exception. Indeed, as 'an he-goat going before the flock,' he proved himself one of the most ardent of Jacobites. On his way, however, with some others, to join the Prince, he was intercepted by the Government troops at St Ninians, near Stirling, and thrown into prison, first in Stirling Castle, and afterwards in Edinburgh. His confinement lasted from September 7, 1745, till May 29 of the following year, by which time the insurrection had been effectually suppressed, so that he had no opportunity of striking the wished-for blow.

But if the sword was denied him, Bishop Forbes took up another weapon, which in his hands proved much more wieldy and successful. Conceiving the idea of becoming the annalist of the campaign, he set to work to gather in from all available and reliable sources information and narratives connected with the Prince and his attempted achievements. The task soon fascinated him. It became his hobby, and next to his clerical duties, it was, from the time he began it, in the end of 1746, the chief labour of his life. He kept at it practically until his dying day; for he was still adding to it in October 1775, and he died in the following month.

For some years he resided with Lady Bruce of Kinross in the Citadel of Leith, probably in the capacity of private chaplain—her ladyship being a member of his congregation, and so noted a Jacobite that her house was twice searched by the military under the belief that the Prince himself was secreted by her—and there he and his hostess received and entertained many of those faithful Highlanders who, proof against the large and tempting reward offered for the betrayal of the Prince, either shared his privations or succoured and assisted him in his necessities; although their doing so entailed certain ruin upon themselves and their families; generally also their own imprisonment and sometimes death. Among others there came oftener than once Flora Macdonald, who narrated with her own lips the steps she took, in perhaps the most critical moment of all the Prince's wanderings, to convey the Prince from Benbecula to Skye, when both islands were so full of soldiers, and every possible point so closely guarded, that no one could leave or land upon them without being observed. This she did by persuading him to don the attire of an Irish female servant, to whom was given the name of Betty Burke; but the difficulties of Flora's task were greatly increased by the unfeminine bearing and gait of the Prince in his new garb.

Another cherished visitor there was old Donald Macleod of Gualtergill, who piloted the Prince from the mainland to the Isles a few days after the battle of Culloden, the voyage being accomplished during night in a terrific storm of thunder, lightning, and wind, which drove the boat before it the remarkable distance of thirty-two leagues in eight hours, but landed them safely at daylight on the shores of Benbecula. This old 'Palinurus,' as the bishop designated him, kept company with the Prince until his escape with Flora Macdonald, when the exigencies of the case demanded his separation from every one of his former associates, and threw him solitary upon an ever-changing series of guides, not one of whom, as has been already remarked, entertained the thought of betraying him, though continually within reach of and having to pass through the cordons of military stretched in all directions for his capture. Most of those the Prince left were seized immediately after his departure and sent as prisoners to the hulks in the Thames. But Donald by-and-by obtained his liberty, and so highly valued were the services rendered by him to the Prince, that one of the Jacobites in London presented him with a large silver snuff-box, double-gilt inside, shaped as an octagon oval, three inches and three-quarters in length, three inches in breadth, and an inch and a quarter deep. On the lid in relief was represented the eight-oared boat in the tempestuous sea, with its thirteen occupants, including Donald at the helm, and the points of embarking and disembarking in the distance. On the box there were also some suitable inscriptions and other chasing. What can have become of this interesting relic now?

From the lips and pens of such as these Bishop Forbes collected the material he has treasured in *The Lyon in Mourning*, which consists of eight small octavo volumes of manuscript of about two hundred pages, each bound in black leather, with blackened edges, and around the title-page of each volume a deep black border. Some relics which he succeeded in obtaining from his correspondents, such as a piece of the Prince's garter, a piece of the gown he wore as Betty Burke, and of the string of the apron he then had on, fragments of the inside and outside cloth of the waistcoat which the Prince got as part of a Highland dress in exchange for his female attire from Macdonald of Kingsburgh, a small bit of wood from the eight-oared boat above named, and a shred of one of the lugs of the brogues which the Prince wore as Betty Burke, were all preserved by the bishop on the insides of some of the boards of the volumes; and to these the late Dr Robert Chambers afterwards added a piece of velvet and buff leather from the hilt of the sword which the Prince wore when on the march from Edinburgh into England. He had rested with his troops while crossing Soutra hill near Fala-dam; and being there entertained with refreshments by the sisters of Robert Anderson of Whitburgh, who followed the Prince, he gave to one of the ladies, upon her request for a memento, a cutting from the dressing of his sword-hilt. *The Lyon in Mourning* came into the possession of Dr Robert Chambers, after having been for some time the property of Sir Henry Stewart of Allanton, who had purchased it from the widow of Bishop Forbes, a considerable time after his death. Dr Chambers published a number of the narratives in his *Jacobite Memoirs*, and also utilised the information contained in *The Lyon* in the preparation of his *History of the Rebellion;* and on his death he bequeathed the work to the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, where it now remains. The fact, however, that *The Lyon* has been thus drawn upon already, detracts little or nothing from the freshness of the narratives about the Prince as they come before us in the work itself.

The bishop completed his collection of Rebellion materials practically about 1750, but never could bring himself to think it prudent to print it. So he kept it open, and added additional narratives and incidents from time to time as he received them. In the later part of *The Lyon*, the Rebellion of 1745 gradually recedes from view; but there is that about the conclusion which makes it of no less interest than the former part of the collection, for it consists of excerpts from letters written by Bishop Forbes himself and others with reference to the circumstances of the Prince upon the Continent, for nearly thirty years afterwards, the narrative being only brought to a close by the bishop's death.

THE FINGER OF HANKIN.

CHAPTER III.

When a young man of twenty-three deliberately adds to his bachelor household an attractive young lady of six summers, who speaks foreign languages and possesses a history, attention is naturally drawn to the performance. Seale's acquaintances, especially the feminine portion of them, were first curious, and then shocked; and out of sheer justice to Nancy he had to tell one or two of them the true story of Hankin. The news spread through that small fraction of London which knew Seale, and the esteem with which it had previously regarded him changed with a very short prelude. It is no use giving dinners to a young man with no expectations who has deliberately chosen to cumber himself with a scamp's brat; and if you have daughters, it is a mad thing to ask to your dances a wretched fellow whom it would be the utmost misfortune for your daughter to fall in love with. And so the invitations ceased with brisk unanimity; and as Seale had been accustomed to much going out and about, he had to do it now on his own resources, which of course cost money.

How he managed to keep going for the next seven years is a matter best known to himself and Nancy, who at an early stage was initiated into the art of circumventing the *res angusta domi*, and living at the rate of twice one's income. But there is a certain amount of enjoyment to be derived from sailing close to the wind, and a *camaraderie* grew up between the two of them that was very pleasant in its completeness. At the same time, that he might not accuse himself of hoodwinking youth, Seale used to instil morality as he went along.

'Y'know we're awful blackguards, old lady, having things and not paying for them the way we do,' he would say; 'and I ought to be kicked for showing a kid like you the style it's managed.'

Upon which Nancy would retort: 'All right, Ted, I quite understand. But it's me that's to blame, not you. If there was no one to fritter money over, you'd live on your pay and have a lot left over. So as far as you're concerned, it doesn't count.'

And then after Seale had solemnly assured her that she was completely wrong, and that he (by reason of his seniority) carried the sin of the pair of them on his own shoulders, they would go off to a theatre, or west for dinner, by way of getting rid of the taste of the lecture.

But this style of living, ingenious though it may be, is liable to be brought to an end from the outside; and when the conclusion did finally come, Seale's only matter for surprise was that it had not arrived several years earlier.

'Old lady,' said Seale one day when he had lit up his cigar after dinner, in the big chair beside the fireplace, 'the bank's given me the chuck.'

'Phe-ew!' said Nancy.

'At least they've told me of another billet that's open, and said that if I don't resign nicely and take it with a smile, I shall probably find myself out of a job altogether. The manager seemed to think that my ideas of personal finance were too florid to be quite healthy in a mere bank clerk.'

'Where's the new billet?'

Seale laughed. 'In a place you've heard of before—Lagos. One year on duty and six months' leave, with steamer fare paid home and back. Three hundred a year and allowances to draw all the time.'

'My!' said Nancy, 'what a lot! It's a heap more than you're getting now. We'll go, eh?'

'You won't, anyway.'

'Why not? Don't we do everything together? I shall come and keep house for you, and save you lots. You can't keep house a bit, Ted.'

'Shall have to. I—— Nancy, come here, old girl.'

Nancy came across the hearthrug, and sat herself upon his knee, and lay back luxuriously.

'Nancy, I've been an awful brute to you. I've kept you here because I liked having you, when you ought to have been away at school with other girls, learning things.'

'I have been learning,' said Nancy stoutly. 'I've had lessons with you nearly every day. I can read, and write, and mend socks, and do accounts, and order a dinner. Isn't that enough?'

'Nowhere near,' said Seale. 'You're growing up, you see. You're thirteen now, and you'll be in long frocks in a year or so, with your hair in a knob, and all the rest of it; and there are things a girl ought to learn that I can't teach; and—well, I'm a pretty bad lot, old lady, and if you go away to a decent school, you'll learn that is so.'

'Ter-waddle,' said Nancy. 'Didn't you saddle yourself with me, and doesn't that prove you to be the best man in the world? 'Tisn't as if I'd never seen any others of the boys. I've met 'em, lots of 'em, and that's why I know what I say's right. And besides, it would never make any difference to me whether you were the biggest sweep on earth, or the biggest angel. You're just my Ted, and that's all I care about.'

'Yes; but Nancy, you couldn't go to the Gold Coast, anyway. You'd lose all your good looks for one thing'——

'Don't care.'

'But I do. I'm proud of them, if you are not. And besides, you'd spoil all the arrangements. This way: you see I get allowance for one only. If you went, there'd be your steamer fare to pay, and an establishment to keep up. And that would run away with all the cash, whereas if I go alone I shall get everything paid, come back with all my screw saved, and then you and I can spend the six months' leave on the jolliest spree imaginable.'

But Nancy did not see it, and said so with point and argument. However, for once in his life Seale was firm. He had a feeling that he would have a much better chance and a much better time of it if he started this new life on the Coast as a bachelor without encumbrances. Still, he did not work openly upon this principle. He said he was leaving Nancy behind, entirely for Nancy's good. But in the end, of course, he got his way.

CHAPTER IV.

A B. and A. boat took Seale across the Bay, and after calling at several African ports, brought up to an anchor head-on to a heavy swell in the Lagos Roads. A small branch steamer came out to her from inside the bar, and Seale tasted the joys of being transhipped in a tossing surf-boat manned by paddling Elmina boys. The branch steamer deposited him at one of the wharfs which jut out from the boulevard of the Marina into the lagoon, and his new chief met him there with a 'rickshaw and a white umbrella.

Knowing that Lagos is a town of negroes, he had somehow or other been prepared to find unlimited bad smells; and because these were entirely absent, the air of the place came to him as a genial surprise. He settled down in two large, cool, whitewashed rooms, and proceeded to enjoy himself.

Being newly landed and full of health, he naturally found the work expected of him ridiculously light; and as he had occasion to put on his dress-clothes every night, and discovered that white men in Lagos are addicted to gorgeous dinners and much hospitality, he told himself with confidence that the Coast had been unjustly maligned, and that he had tumbled into a very snug berth. He retained this ecstatic frame of mind for exactly fourteen days, and then one morning a man came into his office and asked him to dinner for that evening.

'Can't,' said Seale. 'Much obliged all the same. I'm chopping with Anderson to-night. And so by the way are you, although I suppose you've forgotten. He asked us yesterday.'

'You've got to go to Anderson's funeral in two hours' time,' said the other man drily. 'He pegged out with heat apoplexy during the night, just before that tornado came on. Tata; see you at the cemetery. And mind you turn up to dine with me. Seven-thirty, sharp.'

The other man nodded and left, and Seale mopped a very moist brow with his pocket-handkerchief. 'This,' he told himself, 'was the very devil of a climate.' And by way of having the lesson rammed home, he was invited to stand and frizzle in the sun, precisely one week later, whilst the flippant other man was himself being buried.

Seale was consumed with a mild touch of Coast fever that night, and the fear of death gripped him by the heart. He reviewed much of his past life, and was truly sorry that he had not amended his ways earlier, and so avoided coming to Lagos. He laid much solid blame upon Hankin, and told himself that he could dance with calm delight upon Hankin's tomb. Incidentally he remembered Nancy, and tried to carry his resentment along to her; but that did not act. No; it was no fault of Nancy's that he was out in this abominable exile. She was a good little beggar anyhow, and a hot new trouble rose in him when he thought of what must happen to her after he died, as (he was quite sure) must take place within the next few hours.

However, of course, he did not die then; and as an early dose of fever is the very best thing to acclimatise a man, he soon settled down into a very healthy fellow from a Coast point of view. But that early scare had bitten in deeply, and it prevented him from remaining popular with the Lagos community. Where every one is lavishly free-handed, the careful man who does not keep open house is not called careful merely. They give him an uglier name. And if a man of any obstinacy once overhears himself spoken of as 'that stingy brute,' he is rather apt to act up to the character. Besides, every time the dangers of the place were brought home to him more nearly, either by illness within the marches of his own proper body, or by the news of death amongst the white community, Seale could have screamed aloud in his agony of dread as to what would happen if Nancy were left unprovided for.

Yet torment himself as he would, the fund which he was making for her grew with exasperating slowness. He had to eat and drink to live; and everything was expensive; and the pay and allowances which had seemed dazzling enough at a distance, shrivelled wofully when counted on the spot. Moreover, he had always possessed the unwieldy knack of making two shillings go as far as one, and had never contrived to shake himself adrift from it. And so when the time of his first leave came round, he drew his home-pay and accepted a six months' billet in the bush for extra lucre. He wrote home to tell Nancy that he was so hard-worked that he could not get away—which was scarcely true—and also that he was in brilliant health at the time of writing, which was a solid lie.

His next leave he also tried to miss, but broke down with dysentery, and had to spend a much-grudged two months in Grand Canary to save his life. But he came back to the Coast again with new health, and hammered desperately at the dollar-mill to make up his leeway. He was not liked in Lagos still; but some rumour had got about that there was a reason for his stinginess, and some of the men had got a respect for him—though of course that is a vastly different thing from a liking.

But at the end of four and a half years from his leaving England, Captain Charteris came to him again and put another change into his life, as he had done once before.

Seale had not forgotten his old animosity against the man; and when he first brought his face into the office quite unexpectedly—for Charteris had come into money, and was living at home as a decent English gentleman now—Seale bade him uncivilly enough to get out one-time.

'You must hear my message first,' said Charteris, 'although I'm repeating an old offence.'

'What do you mean?'

'I'm bringing Nancy to you. She's up-stairs, waiting in your house this minute, and I've just come down here to break the news.'

'What! Nancy here! Man, you're either dreaming or drunk.'

'I am neither, although I wish I was both. Sure enough, I've no cause for rejoicing.'

Seale sat at his office desk and passed a finger round inside his shirt collar. 'You'd better explain,' he said.

'Quite so. To begin with, Hankin—or rather his ghost—is interfering again. It seems he once invested money in one of the Coast mines here at Axim. That followed the habit of most gold-mines by going pop. But they've found magnificent quartz reefs on either side of his property; and so the ground has been valued at ninety thousand pounds; and, what is better still, has been sold for eighty thousand pounds, and paid for. That's Nancy's now, and nothing would suit her but that she must come down here and give you news of it herself.'

'By Jove!' said Seale. Then after a minute he added: 'But what have you come down here for?'

'Because,' said Charteris slowly and quietly—'because I love her.'

'You love Nancy! You! You love that child! But there, I suppose she's grown up. Well, are you going to tell me next that the pair of you are to be married?'

Charteris looked at him queerly. 'Shouldn't you mind,' he asked, 'if I did tell you that?'

'I shouldn't like it. To be candid, I don't care particularly for you, as you know. But I suppose she'll marry some day. I always have pictured that ever since I've been on the Coast, because, you see, she must be provided for some way.'

'But, man! don't you care for her yourself?'

'Care for her!'—Seale gave a mirthless laugh. 'If you knew what I've been doing here all these years, you wouldn't ask that. Of course I care for her.'

'But how?'

'Oh, I've never defined it. Paternally, I suppose, or like a brother. That kid and I were the best of friends.'

'Seale, you're a fool! Kid, you say. She's a woman. She's the loveliest—— But I'm not going to talk. You must see for yourself. Only, don't you go up-stairs and make any mistake. She's got no daughter's feelings for you, or sister's; and if you go and break her heart over any nonsense of that kind, I've got it in me to shoot you for your pains. I've had my life ruined for me during these last months by you being in the way, and if hers is to be spoiled too by your blundering, you can understand that I shall want to kill you very badly.'

'Wait a minute,' said Seale unsteadily. 'This has come upon me with so much suddenness that I hardly grasp'——

'I have no more to say to you,' said Charteris, and went out into the dazzling sunshine of the Marina, where the shouting negroes were carrying loads over the brick-red dust.

Seale swayed and tottered, then pulled himself together with an effort, and went up the stairs which led to his house above. Nancy knew his footstep and met him at the door, a radiant vision in tropical white. He felt himself tangled by her arms. Her lips were against his ear. 'Oh Ted! my love,' she was saying to him, 'I could not wait away from you any longer. Ted darling, I had to come. Oh! my own love, if you only knew how I had hungered for you, you would have come to me sooner.'

Then Seale's eyes were opened. He did not make the blunder which Charteris had warned him against. He felt no inclination that way. A new feeling towards the girl surged within him like a draught of hot spirit. 'Sweetheart,' he whispered back to her, 'I never knew you would be like this. If I had known, I could never have kept myself away from you.'

THE GOLD-MANIA.

In the getting of gold—the metal—for the purpose of possessing gold—as money—there has always been an element of romance. 'How quickly nature falls into revolt when gold becomes her object!' as Shakespeare says. But if

> For gold the merchant ploughs the main,
> The farmer ploughs the manor—

what shall we say of him who pursues a paper-chase of gold-shares in the 'Kaffir Circus?' This same 'Kaffir Circus' is probably the most remarkable evolution in the history of finance since the days of the South Sea Bubble. Lest the comparison be thought invidious, seeing that South Africa has a solid basis of gold-bearing and other productive land, let us hasten to add that the designs of the South Sea Company were originally much more practical and practicable than has been commonly supposed, and that the tremendous inflation of prices during the 'Bubble' time was hardly, if at all, greater than that of gold-shares during the South African 'Boom.' There is material for the philosopher in the fact of the modern madness having occurred in connection with a part of the world to which King Solomon the Wise sent for supplies of gold and 'almug-trees,' for the mysterious Ophir has been located in Mashonaland, and the Queen of Sheba identified with the Sabia districts, which, though not in 'the Randt,' are curiously connected with the rise and progress of the mania.

Let us briefly trace that romantic history, merely mentioning by the way that, even in European history, African gold is no novelty, for the Portuguese brought back gold-dust (and negro slaves) from Cape Bojador four hundred and fifty years ago. The ruins of Mashonaland were discovered in 1864 by Karl Mauch, who also discovered the gold-field of Taté on the Zambesi, of which Livingstone had reported that the natives got gold there by washing, being too lazy to dig for it. When Karl Mauch came back to civilisation, people laughed at his stories of ruined cities in the centre of Africa as travellers' fables, but a number of Australian gold-diggers thought his report of the Taté gold-field good enough to follow up. So about 1867, a band of them went out and set up a small battery on the Taté River for crushing the quartz. This may be called the first serious attempt at gold-mining in South Africa since the days of the lost races who built the cities whose ruins Karl Mauch discovered and which Mr Theodore Bent has described. A Natal company assisted the Taté diggers with supplies, and enough gold was found to justify the flotation of the Limpopo Mining Company in London. This was in 1868, and was practically the foundation of the 'Kaffir Circus,' though its founders knew it not. Sir John Swinburne was the moving spirit of this enterprise, and went out with a lot of expensive machinery, only to meet with a good deal of disappointment. The diamond discoveries in Griqualand soon drew away the gold-seekers, who found the working expenses too heavy to leave gold-mining profitable, and for a time the Taté fields were deserted. They were taken up again, however, twenty years later by a Kimberley enterprise, out of which developed the Taté Concession and Exploration Company, to whom ex-king Lobengula granted a mining concession over no less than eight hundred thousand square miles of Matabeleland.

Just as the Australians were breaking ground on the Taté, Thomas Baines, the traveller, was making up his mind to test the truth of tales of gold in the far interior, which the Portuguese from Da Gama onwards had received from natives. In 1869 he set forth from Natal with a small expedition, and in 1870 received from Lobengula permission to dig for gold anywhere between the rivers Gwailo and Ganyona. Some seventeen years later this same concession was repeated to Mr Rudd, and became the basis from which sprang the great Chartered Company of British South Africa.

In the course of his journey, Baines encamped on the site of the present city of Johannesburg, without having the least idea of the wealth beneath him, and intent only upon that he hoped to find farther inland. On the map which he prepared of this journey is marked the 'farm of H. Hartley, pioneer of the gold-fields,' in the Witwatersrandt district. Hartley was known to the Boers as 'Oude Baas,' and was a famous elephant-hunter, but as ignorant as Baines himself that he was dwelling on the top of a gold-reef. And it was not in the Witwatersrandt, foremost as it now is, that the African gold boom began.

While the Taté diggers were pursuing their work and Baines his explorations, a Natalian named Button went, with an experienced Californian miner named Sutherland, to prospect for gold in the north-east of the Transvaal. They found it near Lydenburg, and companies were rapidly formed in Natal to work it. Such big nuggets were sent down, that men hurried up, until soon there were some fifteen hundred actively at work on the Lydenburg field. The operations were fairly profitable, but the outbreak of the Zulu war, and then the Boer war, put an end to them for some years.

And now we come to one of the most romantic chapters in the golden history of South Africa, a history which was marked by hard and disheartening days what time the lucky diamond-seekers at Kimberley were swilling champagne as if it were water, out of pewter beer-pots. There is more attraction for adventurers, however, in gold-seeking than in diamond-mining, for gold can be valued and realised at once, whereas diamonds may not be diamonds after all, and may be spoilt, lost, or stolen, before they can find a purchaser.

It is to be noted that much as the Transvaal Republic has benefited from gold-mining, the Boers were at first much averse to it, and threw all the obstacles they could in the way of the miners. And it was this attitude of the Boers, especially towards the Lydenburg pioneers, that led to the next development.

One of the tributaries of the Crocodile River (which flows into Delagoa Bay) is the Kaap River, called also the River of the Little Crocodile, which waters a wide deep valley into which projects the spur of a hill which the Dutch pioneers called De Kaap (the cape). Beyond this cape-like spur the hills rise to a height of three thousand feet, and carry a wide plateau covered with innumerable boulders of fantastic shape—the Duivel's Kantoor. The mists gather in the valley and dash themselves against De Kaap like surf upon a headland; and the face of the hills is broken with caves and galleries as if by the action of the sea, but really by the action of the weather. Upon the high-lying plateau of the Duivel's Kantoor were a number of farms, the chief of which was held by one G. P. Moodie.

One day a Natal trader named Tom M'Laughlin had occasion to cross this plateau in the course of a long trek, and he picked up with curiosity some of the bits of quartz he passed, or kicked aside, on the way. On reaching Natal he showed these to an old Australian miner, who instantly started up-country and found more. The place was rich in gold, and machinery was as quickly as possible got up from Natal, on to Moodie's farm. On this farm was found the famous Pioneer Reef, and Moodie, who at one time would gladly have parted with his farm for a few hundreds, sold his holding to a Natal company for something like a quarter of a million. Then there was a rush of diggers and prospectors back from the Lydenburg district, and the De Kaap 'boom' set in. The beginning was in 1883, and two years later the whole Kaap valley and Kantoor plateau was declared a public gold-field. Two brothers called Barber came up and formed the centre of a settlement, now the town of Barberton. Every new reef sighted or vein discovered was the signal for launching a new company—not now in Natal only, but also in London, to which the gold-fever began to spread (but was checked again by the De Kaap reverses).

Some fifteen Natalians formed a syndicate to 'exploit' this country on their own account. Some were storekeepers in the colony, some wagon-traders, and some merely waiters on fortune. Only eleven of them had any money, and they supplied the wherewithal for the other four, who were sent up to prospect and dig. After six months of fruitless toil, the money was all done, and word was sent to the four that no more aid could be sent to them. They were 'down on their luck,' when as they returned to camp on what was intended to be their last evening there, one Edwin Bray savagely dug his pick into the rock as they walked gloomily along. But with one swing which he made came a turn in the fortunes of the band, and of the land, for he knocked off a bit of quartz so richly veined with gold as to betoken the existence of something superexcellent in the way of a 'reef.' All now turned on the rock with passionate eagerness, and in a very short time pegged out what was destined to be known as 'Bray's Golden Hole.'

But the syndicate were by this time pretty well cleaned out, and capital was needed to work the reef, and provide machinery, &c. So a small company was formed in Natal under the name of the Sheba Reef Gold-mining Company, divided into 15,000 shares of £1 each, the capital of £15,000 being equitably allotted among the fifteen members of the syndicate. Upon these shares they raised enough money on loan to pay for the crushing of 200 tons of quartz, which yielded eight ounces of gold to the ton, and at once provided them with working capital. Within a very few months the mine yielded 10,000 ounces of gold, and the original shares of £1 each ran up by leaps and bounds until they were eagerly competed for at £100 each. Within a year, the small share-capital (£15,000) of the original syndicate was worth in the market a million and a half sterling. This wonderful success led to the floating of a vast number of hopeless or bogus enterprises, and worthless properties were landed on the shoulders of the British public at fabulous prices. Yet, surrounded as it was by a crowd of fraudulent imitators, the great Sheba Mine has continued as one of the most wonderfully productive mines in South Africa. Millions have been lost in swindling and impossible undertakings in De Kaap, but the Sheba Mountain, in which was Bray's Golden Hole, has really proved a mountain of gold.

The De Kaap gold-field had sunk again under a cloud of suspicion, by reason of the company-swindling and share-gambling which followed upon the Sheba success, when another startling incident gave a fresh impetus to the golden madness.

Among the settlers in the Transvaal in the later seventies were two brothers called Struben, who had had some experience, though not much success, with the gold-seekers at Lydenburg, and who took up in 1884 the farm of Sterkfontein in the Witwatersrandt district. While attending to the farm they kept their eyes open for gold, and one day one of the brothers came upon gold-bearing conglomerates, which they followed up until they struck the famous 'Confidence Reef.' This remarkable reef at one time yielded as much as a thousand ounces of gold and silver to the ton of ore, and then suddenly gave out, being in reality not a 'reef' but a 'shoot.' There were other prospectors in the district, but none had struck it so rich as the Strubens, who purchased the adjacent farm to their own, and set up a battery to crush quartz, both for themselves and for the other gold-hunters. The farms were worth little in those days, being only suitable for grazing; but when prospectors and company promoters began to appear, first by units, then by tens, and then by hundreds, the Boers put up their prices, and speedily realised for their holdings ten and twenty times what they would have thought fabulous a year or two previously. And it was on one of these farms that the city of Johannesburg was destined to arise as if under a magician's wand, from a collection of huts, in eight years, to a city covering an area three miles by one and a half, with suburbs stretching many miles beyond, with handsome streets and luxurious houses, in the very heart of the desert.

It was one Sunday evening in 1886 that the great 'find' was made which laid the base of the prosperity of the Johannesburg-to-be.

A farm-servant of the brothers Struben went over to visit a friend at a neighbouring farm, and as he trekked homeward in the evening, knocked off a bit of rock, the appearance of which led him to take it home to his employer. It corresponded with what Struben had himself found in another part, and following up both leads, revealed what became famous as the Main Reef, which was traced for miles east and west.

A lot of the 'conglomerate' was sent on to Kimberley to be analysed, and a thoughtful observer of the analysis there came to the conclusion that there must be more good stuff where that came from. So he mounted his horse and rode over to Barberton, where he caught a 'coach' which dropped him on the Rand, as it is now called. There he quietly acquired the Langlaagte farm for a few thousands, which the people on the spot thought was sheer madness on his part. But his name was J. B. Robinson, and he is now known in the 'Kaffir Circus' and elsewhere as one of the 'Gold Kings' of Africa. He gradually purchased other farms, and in a year or two floated the well-known Langlaagte Company with a capital of £450,000, to acquire what had cost him in all about £20,000. In five years this company turned out gold to the value of a million, and paid dividends to the amount of £330,000. The Robinson Company, formed a little later to acquire and work some other lots, in five years produced gold to the value of one and a half million, and paid to its shareholders some £570,000 in dividends. With these discoveries and successful enterprises the name and fame of 'the Rand' were established, and for years the district became the happy hunting-ground of the financiers and company promoters. The Rand, or Witwatersrandt, is the topmost plateau of the High Veldt of the Transvaal, at the watershed of the Limpopo and the Vaal; and on the summit of the plateau is the gold-city of Johannesburg, some five thousand seven hundred feet above the sea.

In the later eighties and earlier nineties the principal feature in Johannesburg was the Stock Exchange, and the main occupation of the inhabitants was the buying and selling of shares in mining companies, many of them bogus, at fabulous prices. The inevitable reaction came, until once-resplendent 'brokers' could hardly raise the price of a 'drink;' though, to be sure, drinks and everything else cost a small fortune. To-day the city is the centre of a great mining industry, and the roar of the 'stamps' is heard all round it, night and day. From a haunt of gamblers and 'wild-catters,' it has grown into a comparatively sedate town of industry, commerce, and finance, and the gold-fever which maddened its populace has been transferred (not wholly, perhaps) to London and Paris. In fact, all Europe has been inoculated with the disease which at one time made Johannesburg a marvel and a reproach.

That disease is a craving for speculation in the shares of gold-mining companies, and the markets in which dealings in these shares are centred is now called the 'Kaffir Circus.' The fact that South Africa is now producing two and a half million ounces of gold per annum, at a gross profit of about three millions sterling, has fired the imagination and stirred the cupidity of hundreds of thousands of people who have not taken the trouble to inquire what it all means. It took the British public some time to realise that there *is* gold in South Africa, and for a long time the 'speculative investor' of the stock markets fought shy of African ventures; but when he did go in, he went in with a rush, which has become madder and madder. The climax of madness was reached in the present year.

A small handful of men, a few years ago, dropped into the Rand and acquired properties for, in the aggregate, less than a couple of millions, which in the space of eight years reached a realisable value of two hundred millions at the market quotations for shares. Some of these men are now reputed to be worth ten and twenty millions apiece, but how much of the 'worth' may be actually realisable, and how much exists only on paper or in prospect, one cannot say. The whole gold-mining industry of South Africa is now in the hands of companies, and these companies are 'controlled' by some half-dozen cliques, each of which has its 'king.' It is a very curious business altogether, quite without parallel in the history of human endeavour, and a contrast to the experience of Australia, where combined effort in the way of company-working only came into operation when individual diggers had 'creamed' all the nuggets and fallen upon evil times.

We have seen it stated that there is at the present moment more real financial and technical talent concentrated at Johannesburg than at any other part of the world. This may be so, but assuredly there has been more mad greed and reckless folly concentrated in the 'Kaffir Circus' at home than the world has seen since the South Sea days. Anything African put on the market was taken up with a rush, and the bigger the premium the greater the rush. Besides the gold-mining companies, there are companies for buying and holding real estate, for exploration, for lending, and for a variety of other purposes, including, it is to be feared, the purchase of much that is worthless, and the promotion of a good deal that must be profitless. Even among legitimate enterprises, the manner in which the various cliques have re-bought and re-sold their own companies among their own companies—subdivided, amalgamated, consolidated, and separated—is something quite bewildering. 'Claims' acquired for, say, £6000 have, in the course of these transfers and elaborations, in an incredibly short time reached the capital value of £120,000, or more, almost before a hand's turn was done on them. If a good property adjoins a bad one, the way to get rid of the bad one is to amalgamate it with the good one and float a new company to acquire both at four times the original capital, and so on.

Once the arena of speculation was transferred to London—with ramifications to the provincial exchanges—nothing could satisfy the greed of the speculative public. Large operators and small gamblers alike seemed to lose their judgment and to swallow in blind faith anything that came out of Africa at any price. Then France caught the infection, and the small French investors, as well as the dabblers on the Paris Bourse, swung round from Egyptian and Spanish securities to African (and afterwards Westralian, though to nothing like the same extent) gold shares. The extent to which France went into these shares during the fever of last summer cannot have been less than 70 millions sterling, and indeed by some has been computed at 100 millions. Yet only two years ago the capitalised value of all the Witwatersrandt companies was under 18 millions. A year later, namely, at the end of 1894, it was 55 millions, though not more than 1½ million had meanwhile been paid in dividends. This year, such has been the inflation that at one time the capitalised value of all the South African companies (including Charterland, &c.) was as high as 300 millions! There has been a set-back since, but the inflation is still enormous, for most of the companies have not yet paid any dividend at all, and it is doubtful if the legitimate profits of all of them together will this year exceed 2½ millions.

The latest estimate of the gold resources of the Witwatersrandt is that, if mining can be prosecuted to a depth of 5000 feet or so, something like £700,000,000 of gold should be obtained within the next fifty years, at a cost of about £500,000,000. This would leave a clear profit of £200,000,000 in fifty years on a capital (taking the mid-October market valuation of the Witwatersrandt group alone) of £150,000,000. This is little more than 2½ per cent., even supposing all the expectations of 'deep-level' mining are realised, although there is no experience to guide. Is the game worth the candle?

THE FORGED MADONNA.

CHAPTER II.

It was as Elsie Maynard had said then, and very soon old 'Tonelli stood before them, the desponding, worn-out artist, and his still more hopeless wife. With him came a lad bearing something carefully hidden from sight by a faded green baize wrapper, which, after he had dismissed the bearer, the dealer proceeded to unfold.

'There, there, that will do, Seppo; I shall not want you again: you may go.' Then carefully closing and fastening the door, he turned to the waiting pair.

'Ah! signor, you see this time it is I who come to you. Body of Bacchus! but how I was grieved to'—here the wrapper fell to the ground, disclosing the beautiful Madonna and a duplicate carefully chosen panel—'to—not buy what you last send; but indeed no, it was impossible. But now I have come to give you —a little—commission, a—— But what is the matter? You are not well?'

'Oh! it is nothing: I—I am a little tired with my walk, that is all.' For at the magic word 'commission,' the artist's eyes had brightened, and a faint flush had stolen into his wasted cheeks.

'So—that is well—because'—— And the old man glanced doubtfully back at the painter before half to himself he murmured: 'Still, there is none other who can do—just what I require. And you—you must do your very best; must paint as you never did before; as only you can, when you will. And see here'—he turned to the wife, who had remained standing with her hands nervously locked together, trying hard not to show her mingled anxiety and relief—'here is money; go, get wine and food. He will need all his strength to do—but you—you understand—go.' And he pushed her gently from the room, then went back to the waiting man once more.

But the mere prospect of work had been enough to put fresh life and strength into the trembling limbs. Looked at now, he was transformed from the poor heart-broken wretch of the moment before; his eyes sparkled, while the hectic flush deepened on the hollow cheeks, and he half rose from his seat to say: 'Ah! the great Andrea's Madonna; you wish me to copy you that. I have studied it, once before; but—how is this? It is changed—altogether. Is this really the'——

'The great Andrea del Sarto. Of a truth, yes. This is the great original. I myself have cleaned and restored it—have worked a miracle. It is fresh, and almost new. And now, this time, you must paint every line, every detail, every colour, so exact, that were the artist here himself, he would not know which was his own; you—understand.'

And there was a curious intention audible in old 'Tonelli's voice, and a world of meaning in his expressive eye such as startled Maynard for the moment, as the wily one ran on:

'Do this—paint as you alone can—and I—yes, I will give you two hundred English pounds.' And he finished by looking full into the other's eyes.

'Two hundred pounds,' repeated the painter weakly as he sank back in his chair. 'Two hundred'——

'Yes; but mind you, they must be so alike, that no one—not me—not even you—can tell them, the one from the other, apart. Not merely the figure, but every little flaw, mark you, must be exact; you—understand.'

Maynard sat looking back into the cunning eyes as though fascinated by them. It was quite true, he did understand sufficient of what underlay the spoken words to guess that something must be wrong, for never before had the dealer approached him in so strange a fashion; while the very price offered, proved the greatness of the emergency. True, as 'Tonelli had said, he knew of no one who could so exactly do what was required as he, Maynard, could; who had qualified himself by long and patient study, almost, as it would appear, for this very task, but—and a horrid, sickening doubt seized upon and shook him—what if he should have to refuse, after all? What if this offer—which meant to him and his poor wife salvation—what if he could not, dared not, accept it?

And as though in answer to the doubt the old picture-dealer seemed about to speak, possibly to explain, when back came the wife laden with supplies, and he merely exclaimed with much satisfaction: 'Ah! that is good! excellent! Here—drink this!' as he poured out a large glass of wine.

The wine was not a bad Chianti, and in his weak state the artist quickly felt the reviving influence, and together with the food he swallowed he was soon wonderfully strengthened and refreshed.

'Ah! that is indeed well!' repeated the provider of the feast, entirely pleased with the result. 'Now you are more yourself, and remember, you will have to keep up your strength, for you must work night and day. In five days from now the picture must be finished ready for the frame; when I, 'Tonelli, I will do the rest.'

'Right, 'Tony; thy bidding shall be done. But you must have been in luck to find anyone ready to pay so much for a mere copy,' the artist returned, forgetting all his weakness, and his previous doubts, in the prospect of work well paid.

'But I thought I had said this must be no—mere copy. It must be the thing itself.'

'Rather a large order, eh, 'Tony? However, the price will serve; and he will be a clever judge who shall tell the one from the other; that is, if I know myself, or if'—— And before the eloquence of the other's glance the artist suffered a relapse into his previous state of doubt.

'There must be no "if's." You can do it, if you will; while for me, my task is all the easier since I the first one have so recently restored. Who is to know? It is clean and fresh now—the colours bright, and all that is so much in our favour: for the rest, you have but to use—this.' He pulled out a flask from beneath his vest containing a colourless, syrupy fluid. 'Use no other "medium" save this; mix all your colours with this, and in three days I promise you they shall dry hard and fast as though they had been laid this three hundred years.'

'But'——

'You have not used it before. That is no matter. It is a famous vehicle; trust me. It is my own; as easy to work as any "gilp" or varnish of them all.'

'But why such haste—why must it dry so fast? It may affect the colours, or'——

'Not so: it will merely give them age; for, remember, there is no time to lose. In seven days the picture must be done, and in eight it must be three hundred years old.' And again a glance charged with hidden meaning shot from beneath the shaggy, overhanging brows.

And again the artist felt his heart sink within him; but he would ask no more, for—two hundred pounds meant life and health, and it was a terrible temptation.

'Tonelli he knew more as a hard taskmaster than as a dealer in bric-a-brac and works of art—a business in which to be honest is perhaps as difficult as in the most. Possibly, all that could be said for him was that he would be honest—if he could not do better; so that this was no mere commission for a copy, well understood, and to be accepted as such: he had an uneasy consciousness that the sum offered deepened almost into certainty—but what of that? He was in a corner—was too desperately driven now to stick at trifles; while, after all, he did not, nor need he ever, really know. As for the rest, as he had said, that was 'Tonelli's own affair. For himself it meant the cup of water to one perishing in a thirsty land—truly was it life to the dying—and he would be a fool—nay, a criminal—for Elsie's sake, to put the chance aside.

Never had he lent himself to such a thing before, and would infinitely have preferred to keep clean hands; but there—the less he thought of it the better. It was merely the ordinary cruelty of life. Nothing ever came in this world just as one would have it. And anyhow, this was his one way out. It did seem a pity, but it might not be so bad, after all. How did the proverb run? *Sempre il mal non vien per nuocere* ('Misfortune does not always come to injure.')

And in his debate he got up and began to pace the room, followed by 'Tonelli's watchful, crafty eyes.

'You doubt still, Signor Maynardo. Is it that the price is not enough? Shall I go with it to some other?'

'You have said there is no other—can do exactly what you want,' rejoined the artist tartly, but turning towards him all the same.

'Ah! perhaps, but—listen: I will tell you what is between ourselves—what you must never tell again.'

And Maynard listened helplessly, longing, but not daring, to bid him stop and leave him to his pretended ignorance. But no, the old fellow hesitated for a moment, then went on more confidently with his compound of truth and falsehood.

'Supposing that I told you I have a customer ready at a fair—nay, at a good price, if you will, to purchase—this'—— And he laid his hand on the picture which he had placed on the artist's own easel.

'But surely, that is not'—— began Maynard, then stopped as he suddenly remembered: 'Better not to know—more than he chooses to tell; and, if I am to do—what he asks, as I must—still better to believe—all I can.'

'You are too hasty by far. The picture is not mine. So much you and I both know full well; but'—this slowly and impressively—'what if the nuns up there were willing to part with their treasure, and fill their treasury at the same time; to let it go—for a price; and always providing the act was not known—and if you paint the—the substitute—who is to know? It is true the colours will be somewhat fresh, but I can see to that; besides, it has been cleaned: I, the famous 'Tonelli, have restored it.'

'H'm! rather a curious, not to say complete, restoration,' interposed the other, but feeling relieved; for if that was the most, surely he need not hesitate to do what was required. 'And anyhow,' he murmured: '*Se non è vero è ben trovato.*' And with that, what with his weakness and the wine he had swallowed, leaving him scarcely master of his judgment, he finished by bidding the tempter send him what he needed in the way of brushes and colours, then showed him to the door.

And after the colours arrived, Maynard worked on far into the night. As 'Tonelli had said, if the picture must be ready, there was little time to lose. But towards two o'clock the first excitement died away, and, terribly weary and exhausted, he lay down for an hour or two's sleep, first cautioning Elsie to wake him at five.

At seven she really did so, not finding in her heart to disturb him before. But by then breakfast was laid, and she dared not longer delay; so woke him reluctantly, with an anxious heart: after which he painted steadily on, with short intervals of rest, all through the long summer's day.

He was always a rapid worker, and by night the picture began to show signs of the order that soon was to issue from the seeming chaos: through having studied his subject before, he was able to go more directly to work, brushing in the broader effects with a bold, sure touch, and leaving all detail for the later paintings. To Elsie he remarked later, as she stood by him with his neglected supper:

'Odd I should have been so struck with this particular thing before. Considering what an influence it will have upon my life, one could almost believe there was a fate in these things. Nothing seems ever quite thrown away, or to stand by itself, but always to be part of the great web of life—when one can see the whole, that is; though, in my great despair at the seeming deadlock yesterday, I little thought of what would be the way out.—Rest—no, I can't afford to give up yet. I must make quite sure.'

'But think, dear, how weak you still are! What if you should break down for want of a little care?'

'I must risk that, I suppose, though hope has given me a new strength. Somehow, it is borne in upon me that I shall finish it; and, do you know, Elsie, if there is anything of the kind that hard work and previous study will not explain, I feel almost as though I were inspired. I have never done anything half so good, or worked with greater certainty and ease. The great master himself might be guiding my brush and arranging my palette. I have a sort of instinct for the exact colours that never fails me.'

And really it seemed as though it must be so, as on the fifth night he lay down with the picture so well advanced that, as old 'Tonelli himself observed, there was no longer any fear.

Something else that the old man let fall, however—only a word dropped in his excitement—checked the successful painter's exultation, and set him thinking; and whether from this cause or not—who can say?—but that night he had a dream.

He thought he was once more in the little chapel—perched so high on a projecting spur of the Apennines—kneeling before the flower-decked shrine, while from above there gazed down at him the mild, sad eyes of his own Madonna, full of a terrible reproach. Eyes that appeared alive and to look out and through the picture as from behind a mask, and that caused his heart to fail him utterly and turn, as Scripture hath it, to water in his breast; so wistfully upbraiding, so tenderly eloquent were they in their expression of a deep and abiding distress. What did they—what could they mean?

For some unexplained reason he kept the knowledge of his dream from his wife. It was no use troubling her—though why she should be affected he would not clearly own—but brooded over it in secret, all the long day; while still the inspiration held, and he painted both rapidly and well, to again fall asleep and have the dream repeated. But this time the whole face appeared alive and still more eloquent with its mute appeal. A silent message that would not be denied, but made itself felt and understood; exactly how he could not well define. And so strong was its influence that it woke him from his uneasy slumber as though an actual voice had called him.

Woke him to an agony of doubt; a silent conflict that lasted all through this, the seventh and last day. And as he still painted moodily and desperately on, under his brush there grew the exact expression borne by the picture of his dream—a true Mater Dolorosa, with a face whose haunting loveliness ate into his heart, and set him palpitating and longing for release from this sudden, awful conviction of his sin. For, let him strive to close eyes and ears as he might, he knew now that old 'Tonelli lied, and that, although he might be the instigator, yet was his the real sacrilege.

And as evening came on, and the last touch was given, he sat before his work, unable to meet its ineffable air of condemnation: the conviction strengthened and gripped him as in a vice, letting him know no peace.

So torn and tossed about had be been by the throes of his inward debate, that anxious Elsie could not but see that something was seriously wrong, nor yet avoid noticing that he had been able to eat scarcely anything through the day; but she said nothing of her fears, not even when dropping his paint-stained palette and brushes with a low inarticulate cry—almost as of an animal in pain—he fell back in his seat with his hands pressed closely before his smarting, burning eyes.

Still he never spoke, nor even signed an answer to her wild entreaties, her pitiful inquiries, as to what could be the matter—forced from her by his long-continued quietude—until she helped him, finally quite worn out and utterly prostrated, to their wretched pallet of a bed.

So worn out and so utterly prostrated was he as almost immediately to fall into a heavy but uneasy slumber, from which he did not wake until long past noon the following day.

Spite of his long rest, he was pitifully weak and low, could scarcely raise his head from the pillow where it lay; but as Elsie held the cup of strong restorative to his reluctant lips, he tried his best to please her by sipping a little, then pushed the remainder gently aside. He felt as though it choked him, and he was too full of his new resolve to longer postpone telling her of his decision.

'Elsie!' he murmured, while a world of pitying tenderness shone from his eager eyes. 'Oh! how am I to tell you?' he broke off with a groan; while she, full of a sudden fear, reassuringly pressed his hand. Soon he recommenced: 'Oh! my dear, listen to me and have patience. Bear with me, Elsie, for I have been weak, shamefully weak; and in my great desire to save both you and myself, have given way before this terrible temptation, all the more insidious because so subtle; but I know now that I was wrong every way. I have learned the truth in a dream—if dream it really were;' and he glanced half doubtfully at his wife, over whose face had fallen the shadow of a coming trouble, before he went on: 'This picture that I have painted was to be used as a cheat, a fraud—a lie. And oh Elsie! I guessed the truth from the first, but I would not let myself believe. It is no use fighting against it any longer; the truth has prevailed. Spite of myself, the work of my own hands has convinced and convicted me. You have but to look on my Madonna's face to read my condemnation there. You will see it as well as I.'

He paused for breath as his wife sank down by the bedside and rested her burning face against his hand.

'Not only that: she came to me in a dream. For the third time I was in the little chapel, kneeling before the shrine, above which hung the picture—not the true one, but the false one I had painted—and the eyes looked down on me with such an intensity that the reproach burned into my soul; and although I could not bear it, my heart was hardened, and I still refused to understand. But this time I heard a voice which filled my ears with its clear vibrating tone until I shook and trembled, "Whoso shall seek to save his life, shall lose it." And with that my eyes were opened. And oh, Elsie! my poor dear—not even for your sake can this thing be.'

Still she made no answer; only now her tears flowed freely over the fever-wasted hand. Once she moaned slightly, as though in pain, and the sound startled him from his own preoccupation.

'Oh Elsie! try—try not to make it harder than you can help.'

And at the cry she answered him in a voice all broken by her sobs: 'Oh Geoffrey! it is not that. You—you don't know the worst. It is I who have done this shameful thing, I who—oh! listen, Geoffrey, while I try to make you understand. I too feared the very worst—that there was something wrong about the picture; but—I let you go on; not daring to ask, or object, or say a single word, lest my fears should prove reality, and the work that was to save your life should prove only your dishonour.' She stopped, too much agitated to finish.

'There, there, dear—don't cry. It is late—but not too late. For this wrong—we must let it go no further; and for the rest—we must bear it—as best we may.'

She gave a gasping, shuddering cry before, breaking out afresh, she began: 'Oh! even now you don't know all! But you must—you shall. Oh Geoffrey! what can I say to help you to forgive me! It was for you alone I did it; but spite of what I knew and feared, I—I wanted to put the deed beyond recall, and—may Heaven forgive me—I—I let the picture go.'

'You—let—the—picture—go!'

'Yes—while you were asleep. It is too late now! 'Tonelli was here himself last night. He brought the money and took away the'——

But Elsie was interrupted by a deep hollow groan from her husband, and looking up at the sound, she saw him with his white drawn face lying fixed and still against the scarcely whiter pillow.

Plainly the news, together with the terrible strain of the week's overwork, had been too much for his enfeebled frame, and he had fainted; and in a perfect frenzy of alarm she ran to the cupboard for the brandy, which of late she had always kept ready to her hand.

Slowly he opened his eyes, but half vacantly, as though even then the soul had hardly yet come back, while he murmured softly, and more to himself than her: 'No—one may not do evil that good may come. I was wrong—for really, and in my heart, I knew the truth all the time. And this—this is my punishment. One cannot set bounds to one's evil-doing, and say—thus far, and no further will I go. I gave way before temptation, and now, when my eyes were opened, and I would have turned back—it is too late—too late!' And as though echoing another voice: 'He that would save his life shall lose it;' he repeated then, more wildly: 'I have sold my soul to Satan—where—where is the price? We—we must not touch it, Elsie, though, without it, we must starve. No—it will drag me down—down—when I am gone.'

And with that he turned his face to the wall.

PARROTS I HAVE KNOWN.

Having lived with parrots considerably more than half my life, I have ventured in these pages, out of respect to the sacred memory of the dead, as well as in honour to the living, to set down some short account of the three venerable birds with whom I have been privileged to be on terms of personal friendship. I need hardly premise, having entered upon such a task, that nothing shall be set down that has not actually taken place: I guarantee that in no case shall veracity be sacrificed for the sake of effect; and if occasionally these my feathered friends be found to have expressed themselves in language more plain than polite, this, I feel sure, will be pardoned them.

The first parrot whom it was my privilege to know resided in the house where I was born. He was an extremely handsome bird, and his plumage was always in beautiful condition. He was, moreover, blessed with an exceedingly good temper. It is true that tradition said that in his early days he had been addicted to swearing - a bad habit picked up during his voyage to this country from his sailor companions—but words of such a character had happily quite faded from his memory by the time when I first made his acquaintance. By that time, indeed, he had got so far as to occasionally become pious, so pious that he had to be removed from the room at the time of family prayers, as he was prone to exclaim 'Let us pray' at inopportune moments, and would occasionally even repeat about half of the Lord's Prayer. The indignity of banishment from the dining-room to the hall on such occasions weighed heavily upon him; he resorted to a mean revenge, which proved so successful that he must often have chuckled over it to himself. One night, in the middle of the evening devotions, the sound of the street door latch being unfastened, caused the hasty exit, amid general alarm, of the family. No one was at the door, but some nights later the alarm was repeated; it became common at prayer time, and it was not until some time afterwards discovered that the prayerful exile had endeavoured by this very successful ruse to draw attention to the indignity of his position.

Parrots are not above availing themselves of artificial means, when they think it necessary, for the proper reproduction of a particular voice or sound. For instance, in order to obtain the resonance of tone required for the successful imitation of the deep voice possessed by the master of the house, this particular bird would invariably put his head into his empty or half-empty seed-tin, a method of voice production he was never known to adopt at any other time, or for the imitation of any other voice or sound. He thus succeeded in producing a very perfect imitation, and his orders (always most peremptorily proclaimed) were occasionally mistaken for those of his master.

On one occasion a friend had arrived unexpectedly from the country, when the family were out of town; only the master of the house was at home, and he was also going away the very evening his friend arrived. The visitor was, however, asked to remain for the night, an offer which he accepted. The following morning, to the disgust of the servant who was engaged in her work, he appeared early upon the scene, inquiring for her master. 'Master went away last night,' she answered. 'Impossible! Why, I heard him call for his hot water and his boots this morning,' cried the astonished guest. 'Oh sir, that was the parrot,' answered the servant.

The bird sometimes uttered words in season. His owner was a clergyman with a curacy at the East End of London. When the rector made his first call, he was shown into a room where for some minutes he and the bird were alone together. On the entrance of the lady of the house, her visitor at once remarked: 'There is no occasion for me to ask your husband's views, as your parrot has just greeted me with the words "No Popery for Polly."' The bird had, perhaps not unnaturally, an ecclesiastical turn of mind; he would constantly exclaim, in a burst of enthusiasm, 'Long life to Canterbury.' The word 'Archbishop' he left out; it was too much for him. At the same time he could be critical, and when dissatisfied with the views expressed upon religious questions, would state his opinion warmly. At the time of the great controversy respecting the Maynooth grant, when party spirit ran high, several clergymen met one evening to discuss at the house where the bird lived the burning question of the hour. Polly was covered over, according to custom, after it became dark, and no notice was taken of him. A heated discussion took place, but after a time a slight momentary pause occurred in the conversation, whereupon a stern voice was heard angrily ejaculating from the covered cage, 'Stuff! Pack of nonsense! Rubbish!'

This parrot much enjoyed being placed on the balcony of the portico of the house, where he would remain for hours, much to the amusement of the boys in the street; but from this coign of vantage the cage had to be removed, as he hailed the passing omnibuses, and persisted in calling for cabs.

All the parrots I have known have been accustomed to pass the night in their swings. From this upper or bedroom story the bird one evening fell suddenly down to the floor of the cage. Though he was not in any way injured by the fall, the shock drew from him the exclamation, 'Oh, good gracious!'

A friend living in the neighbourhood used to pass the house as he went to and fro to his daily occupation; he was in the habit of knocking two or three times a day, and, truth to tell, he became rather a bore. One day, when he was giving his usual double knock, Polly exclaimed in a loud and distinct voice, 'There's that Robbins.' It appeared, on inquiry, that the cook, whose duty it was to open the door in the morning, had become exasperated by his repeated visits, and had been accustomed to utter these words when she heard him at the door.

It is, I believe, unwise to feed these birds on hemp seed alone; they certainly should never be given meat of any kind, as all grease is bad for them. Our first bird, however, I must confess, flourished long both on hemp seed and on meat, in utter defiance of any rule of the kind; and I very well remember his angry squall at dinner time, repeated until a bone had been given him to pick. In spite of this diet, his feathers were always in beautiful condition, and up to the day of his death his gray and red plumage was charming to behold.

There was an old factotum in our family who used to sew for us, and who occasionally spent several weeks at a time at the house. She was somewhat of a character, had been married three times, and to distinguish her second dear departed, was in the habit of calling him 'my middle husband;' old maids she naturally did not approve of, remarking that they were the only things not prayed for in the Litany. The old woman was very deaf, and much shouting was needed to make her hear. One day many vain efforts were made to induce her to do a piece of work in a particular way, but she could not or would not see what was wanted, and at last in despair the lady of the house remarked to the nurse, 'Oh, never mind; when she is gone, it must be altered.' 'Ah,' remarked the parrot, in a loud clear voice, 'there's no fool like an old fool.'

This bird lived with us for about thirteen years, and his death was caused by a cold. He had accompanied us for a summer holiday to a cottage in Surrey, and one day was unwisely hung up in a draught between a door and a window. The cold ended in inflammation of the lungs, and after lingering for nearly a week, he died; his last words—addressed to his mistress—were, 'Kiss me, Emily.' Much grief, I need hardly say, was felt for his loss; he was carried to his grave wrapped in a little flannel gown, and carefully buried under an evergreen at the end of the lawn.

Our second bird had belonged to my grandmother, and after her death spent the last two or three years of its life with us. Our first pet had lived at my grandmother's house for a few weeks before it finally came to ours, and she had grown so attached to it that, when it left her, she purchased a bird of her own. This bird was gray in colour, with a red tail; but while Polly the first was the proud owner of beautiful plumage, Polly the second had acquired the bad habit of picking out his feathers, and the consequent loss of his waistcoat gave him a very shabby appearance. Of course the dealer who sold him declared that this was but a passing disfigurement, and that all would soon be right; so he came on approval, and soon became so great a favourite that he remained permanently, though to his dying day his appearance never improved. Curiously enough, this parrot at no time ever suffered, as might have been expected, from lung disease; like the other, he was a clever talker, but his temper was not of so amiable a character—possibly his want of feathers irritated him—but some of his utterances were much on a par with, and as equally to the point as those of his predecessor. The habit, so noticeable in birds of every description, of remarking the flight of time, was in this one very remarkable. At six o'clock in the evening, as soon as the clock struck, his usual habit was to exclaim, 'Put me to bed;' and if no notice was taken of his request, he uttered unpleasant screams, and on being told to be quiet, would reply, 'Why don't you put me to bed?' The cover having been placed over his cage, he would immediately exclaim, 'Now put little Dicky to bed.' 'Little Dicky' was a canary who lived in a cage which hung above his own. On one occasion, when placed one summer's day at the open window of his home, he much offended an old lady who was passing, by calling out loudly, 'Who are you, you old guy?' She knocked at the door and scolded the servant, insisting that some one had deliberately insulted her.

The parrot had on one morning been given a bath, or, in other words, the garden watering-can had been turned upon him, and was placed in front of the fire to dry. There were two small kittens who also liked the warmth of the fire, and who were sitting one on each side of the cage. The bird walked first to one side, and looking down out of the corner of his eye, inquired, 'Are you a good boy?' Then he sidled across to the other end of his perch and said to the other kitten, 'And are you a good boy?'

One day two children of our family visited the house, and when alone amused themselves by mischievously pulling up some tulips, which grew in a pot in the room, by the roots, afterwards carefully replacing them. A little later, Polly's master, to whom the plants belonged, came into the room, and immediately exclaimed, 'Oh, look at my tulips; see how they are growing.' Polly at once uttered two words, and only two—the reader will forgive their rudeness, they were so much to the point; they were, 'You ass!' I need hardly say that some time elapsed before the owner of the tulips was made acquainted with all the particulars of what had happened.

Our third parrot was the present of a kind friend in the summer of 1877, having been brought from Africa only a few months previously. Her plumage is the same in colour as were her predecessors. She was, when she first came, evidently a young bird, and has grown since we have had her. In spite of her eighteen years, there is no sign of age about her; she sings, dances, climbs, and whistles with all the vigour of youth, and though perhaps smaller in size than the other two birds, is quite as noisy. In many ways she is, however, very different from them, being, for instance, much more shy in the presence of strangers, before whom she will very rarely talk at all, and is more curious in her habits, taking great fancies to some people, and decided dislikes to others. She has an unpleasant habit of sometimes wishing visitors good-bye when she does not approve of them. She also, if she cannot get what she wants, gives angry whacks and double knocks upon the tin floor of her cage. Nothing appears to delight her more than mischief. She positively revels in it, and to get hold of anything she ought not to have is unmixed joy. Evidently the bird has been at some time very cruelly treated: for many months she was terrified at the sight of a man or a boy, and for years a broomstick was an object of horror to her. Since getting over this fear, she has shown a decided liking for the sweep and the coalman, and the latter has left the house with the bird wishing him pleasantly good-bye and affectionately requesting him to kiss her, which gives rise to the question whether she may have had, in her African past, a kind negro friend. Any one who has ever had opportunities of studying the parrot tribe must have been struck with their extraordinary gift of memory, so long ago observed by Plutarch.

At the early part of her first winter with us she had a severe illness, and at last became so weak that she remained at the bottom of the cage. Frequent doses of brandy-and-water put to her beak in a marrow spoon revived her, as did also the warmth of the fire. Polly seemed greatly to enjoy the alcohol, and for the benefit of birds similarly attacked, I should strongly advise it. It has often since been given to her when she has appeared weak or out of sorts. Rightly or wrongly, we inferred that feeding the bird on hard, unboiled Indian corn was the cause of her illness. On her recovery, from that day to this she has always soaked her food in the water tin; the success of which led her at one time to soak the stones from the gravel at the bottom of her cage. This experiment, however, she soon gave up. We once, indeed, found a black beetle in soak in her tin, but beyond this she has confined her operations simply to her food-supply. The common idea that parrots simply repeat only what they hear, and in nowise alter their sentences, is certainly erroneous; this bird often varies her remarks, sometimes rather amusingly, calling the cat, 'Tom Puss,' and 'Puss Cat.'

It is very curious to observe the peculiar way in which these birds learn their lessons. When a fresh word is being acquired, at first (though not always) the word is miscalled, and the parrot will constantly repeat it, just like a child practising a lesson, becoming perfect by degrees. Then when quite mastered, the word is put away, as it were, at the back of its memory, to be brought forward when required, two or three years sometimes elapsing before the occasion arises. Some easy words it is found quite useless to endeavour to teach the bird; for instance, for years the words 'Thank you' have been said to her when giving her food, but she never has once uttered them on receiving it. On one occasion, though, on seeing some delicacy being given to the cat, she remarked, in a reproving voice, 'Thank you.' Good-morning and good-night are constantly said at the proper times, but a heavy London fog perplexes her; she hesitates which to say, sometimes ending the matter on a dark morning by remarking, 'Good-night.'

Cats have always been a great attraction to her. One fine fellow, who was a great favourite, by name 'Thomas,' she called beautifully, occasionally slightly altering his name to 'Tom Ass.' He has been in his grave eleven years (and here again the curious power of memory appears at intervals); 'Tommy, Thomas,' and 'Poor old Tom,' are tenderly called, often in the fond tone of those who grieve for the dear departed.

A young kitten succeeded Thomas, by name Peter. In early youth he distinguished himself by various tricks, always to his cost, by walking on the top of the cage when the cover was on, having his paws consequently nipped. One very weak moment he ventured to sit down on the top, dangling his fine tail within the bars. Polly, of course, seized a firm hold of it, with the disastrous consequence that bird, cat, and cage all fell down to the ground together.

Another time, when on the table, the cage was seen to move about five inches, the bird having secured a firm grip of Peter's tail while clinging tight to the perch. Years have, however, in a degree brought wisdom to Peter, who is able to measure his distance within half an inch. Still, in spite of this harsh treatment, the cat appears really attached to the parrot, guarding her from strangers of his own family on summer days, when they are both basking in the sun in their London garden. This is more than ordinary kindness, for when the cat steals, a warning cry of 'Peter!' attracts attention; and once, on Puss jumping on to the kitchen table, Polly immediately exclaimed, 'Peter, you are stealing.'

One peculiarity of the bird, which I do not recollect in the former two, is the power of distinguishing each member of the family individually, calling them by their respective names, and this, whether or not she is covered over, or is in the dark. Having lived within the sound of 'Big Ben' for several years, the parrot is fond of copying him. This she does mostly late in the evenings, when the traffic in the streets is quietest. She booms the note quite correctly, occasionally in the interval between the chimes and the first stroke of the great bell, insinuating perhaps the not unfair idea that 'Big Ben' might hurry up.

Parrots are born whittlers; the tearing up of soft wood is to them a great delight. Perhaps exercise keeps them in health. 'Give the bird something to do,' the attendant at the Zoological Gardens wisely advised, and very excellent advice it was. The bird will often demolish a large stick of firewood in one day, but objects strongly to any person seeing the performance. Unless quite alone in the room, she insists on being secluded from view by her cover, and if any one lifts it up to see what is going on, she directly leaves off work, raises her feathers like a turkey cock, and sometimes has demanded in an angry voice, 'What do you want?' The sticks which she is destroying are always cleverly placed between the bars, sometimes upright, so as to get a purchase upon them.

The bird is fond of counting, but cannot go beyond seven. Often when cribbage is being played, she joins in with her figures. Laughing, too, appears to give her much pleasure. Unlike the other two birds, this one has always been allowed to come out at feeding hours, and spends some time at the top of the cage, where she flaps her wings, and then usually descends and takes a promenade to see what mischief she can find to do, finally going in when the food is ready for her. If kept waiting longer than she thinks right, she will call her attendant by name, saying, 'Come along, here, here.' A favourite remark of hers is, 'It is all the same,' spoken in a reassuring voice. Once when a gentleman was fussing and fuming about some business, she aptly answered, 'Don't bother yourself about it.' Also another day she observed, 'You must prove that.'

Like our first bird, she has had also to be banished during family prayers. For some two years or so she remained silent, and then blossomed out, and began to join in and quote the collect, 'Oh Lord, who hast taught us.'

A few words may not be out of place with regard to the feeding of these birds. They should be given plenty of clean water, clean gravel, and a clean cage. When the perch is scrubbed, it should be dried by the fire. Hemp, canary, and millet seed, mixed together in equal parts, is a very good diet. Chillies and the large whole peppers should about once a week be given. Water-cress, celery, mustard and cress, and lettuce are excellent: any kind of fruit in season is good. Orange peel, to pick to pieces, much interests them. Hard-boiled egg, sponge-cake, boiled rice, and biscuits are good food; while for medicines, palm-oil (about as much as will lie on a shilling) and a little brandy in their water tin appears to answer best. Above all, keep the birds warm, both in summer and winter; never let them be in a draught, and never, unless you wish to kill them, leave them uncovered at night.

THE LUFFA.

By Professor CARMODY, F.I.C., F.C.S., Trinidad.

PERSONS who object to the slimy condition that so quickly results from the continued use of soap on the sponge or flesh-glove, formerly held in high estimation as an important part of the furniture of the bath-room, will have already become familiar with the above substitute for these time-honoured requisites. The spelling of the word in English is subject to many unaccountable variations. It may be seen as *Lloophar*, *Loofah*, &c., in the shop windows, but never as *Luffa*, which appears to be the best spelling. The word is derived from *louff*, the Arabic name for *Luffa ægyptiaca*.

It is now thirteen years since the writer made the acquaintance of the Luffa in the establishment of an enterprising Glasgow *coiffeur*, and since that time—to borrow the words of a famous advertisement—'he has used no other.' Its chief advantages over the sponge are that it lasts longer, and remains perfectly clean, and free from that objectionable stickiness which characterises the best flesh-gloves and Turkey sponges after a comparatively short period of use. Besides this, its roughness causes that healthy reaction of the skin which, according to hygienists, is so essential to the proper enjoyment of the bath, and which has called into existence such ingenious contrivances as flesh-brushes, Turkish towels, tape-woven towels, and a host of kindred scrubbers. It is quite possible to produce a delightfully warm surface-glow in a cold bath by a small amount of friction with the Luffa; and this is an enormous boon to persons fond of cold bathing and yet subject from their use to such unpleasant consequences as chilled extremities. But its roughness is the chief objection which persons—especially those with tender skins—make to its use. When first used, it certainly feels rough, but the roughness soon disappears. And if plenty of soap is used with it, the most delicate skin will suffer no discomfort from the use of even a new Luffa. There are both coarse and fine kinds, and persons with tender skins would naturally choose the latter, leaving the coarser kinds for the pachyderms who prefer them.

The Luffa is generally supposed to come from Egypt; but I have been told that Japan and India now supply the London market. When I came here about five years ago, I was not a little surprised to find a very similar gourd (*L. acutangula*) growing wild, and used almost exclusively, under the name of 'vegetable sponges,' for scrubbing floors. Whether they are indigenous to the island or not, I am unable to say. The seeds may have been imported to this colony, and planted by the East Indian immigrants, who number about seventy thousand of the population. It is certain that they are the principal growers of them, and their houses and hedges may commonly be seen supporting the heavy weight of the twenty or more gourds which the stem itself would be quite unable to bear. When the pods are young, they are tender, and in this condition are said to be eaten by the Indians.

The Luffa is a climbing plant, and, when supported, may reach a length of thirty feet or more. In appearance it is so very like the cucumber that it might easily be mistaken for the latter. The stem, the leaves, the flower, the fruit, are all very similar. When the green skin of the fruit is removed, the fibrous network is found immediately beneath and adhering to it. The skin cannot be removed in this way without tearing the fibre, and it is therefore usual to soak it in soft water, or in soap and water, until it peels off easily. It is then washed thoroughly, to remove the mucilage in the interior of the gourd, and then exposed to the rain and sunshine to bleach.

Other uses to which this material has been applied are (1) As inner soles for boots, for which purpose it has great advantages over felt; (2) As a shape for ladies' bonnets or hats, which by the addition of a few flowers can be made to look very pretty; and (3) During a visit to London last summer, the writer saw a substitute for a straw hat for men's wear made from the Luffa and exposed for sale in a large shop in Cheapside. The lining of the hat bears the information that it is manufactured under the protection of a patent. Other uses will probably be found for this fibre, which grows so easily, and can be prepared with so little trouble.

But while it answers these purposes fairly well, its chief use for the present will be in the bath-room, and here its superior cleanliness must ensure for it increased popularity. The Luffa is now imported into England in such large quantities that the retail price of one twenty inches long is about fourpence, or about one-fifth of the price they were sold at ten years ago. The freight from here would cost more than the wholesale price that would be paid for the goods after their arrival in London: such is the result of the constant influx of large quantities of every purchasable commodity through the agency of the giant ships that now seek for cargo in every part of the habitable world. It gives the public the advantage of being able to obtain a really serviceable article at a nominal price.

THE VALLEY OF DREAMS.

A LILIED stretch of shadowed water-way,
Cool and remote, unnoticed by the sun,
Where even Echo sleepeth, silent aye,
As if her work were finished, unbegun.

Dream-shadows hide within those depths unstirred,
Dream-voices haunt the drowsy silence sweet,
And, like the downward rush of startled bird,
Falleth remembrance of long-silenced feet.

The noon-day passeth unobserved, and lo!
Unmarked the night descendeth, starry-crowned;
But still the silence broodeth here below
Unbroken ever, yet replete with sound.

LYDIA M. WOOD.

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PASTIME AND BUSINESS.

Posterity will with good reason select as one of the most remarkable features of the social history of the nineteenth century—indeed, of the later half only of the nineteenth century—the extraordinary alliance which was brought about between pastime and business.

In the estimation of not merely our ancestors, but of our predecessors of half a century ago, there could not be the slightest relationship between pastime and business. Not only was the contemporaneous existence of the one with the other deemed incompatible with the proper working of the affairs of life, not merely was it inconceivable that the development of a people's pastimes could be an enormous factor in the wealth and weal of the nation, but the two were regarded as absolutely antagonistic, and the pastime-loving nations of the south were pointed to as instances of the corruption and feebleness which naturally were the fruits of such an inclination. The business man of a by no means remote generation had an actual suspicion and dislike of all pastime which necessitated the occasional encroachment upon the working hours of the week, and the absolute refusal of our grandfathers to tolerate any form of recreation upon the one day of rest served to perpetuate the Puritanical Sabbath which had been created more than two centuries before. A pastime-loving clerk or 'prentice lad was regarded as on the high-road to ruin; and we need only turn back to an old number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* to note how strongly and vehemently employers of labour and fathers of sons who had to make their way in the world declaimed against the evil influence on the young mind of cricket matches.

It is frequently shown that in the departments of discovery and invention there is really nothing new under the sun, and the modern schoolmaster abroad can give us chapter and verse proofs of a pre-knowledge, or, at any rate, a pre-suspicion in past days of the existence of almost every startling discovery and invention of modern times; but there is not one jot or one tittle of evidence that our forefathers ever had the smallest idea that an enormous proportion of the trade of a nation should become dependent upon the pastimes of that nation.

Pastime of any kind—active pastime, that is—was essentially the property of the young and the wealthy. When a youth left school he was supposed to leave his pastimes behind him, and, as we have said, if he afterwards betrayed a sneaking fondness for them, he was regarded as unfit for the business of the world, which was performed in so grave and ponderous a way as to permit no deviation into frivolous paths. In fact, for ordinary men there were no pastimes. The hours of business over, a man either went straight home, or to his coffee-house or club, with the result that gambling and heavy drinking too often occupied the hours employed by the middle-aged Englishman of to-day in recreating his mind and invigorating his body. As for the young men—well, contemporary social pictures sufficiently inform us as to their method of killing leisure time.

Even the sports of hunting, shooting, fishing, and horse-racing, which were termed generally popular, only occupied the attention of a proportionately very small section of the community, and were not conducted on the principles which make them now such invaluable aids to business and trade. Moreover, our province in this paper is strictly that which comprises pastime as distinguished from what is properly called sport.

It is almost impossible to contemplate without a shudder the result of such a phenomenon as the sudden collapse of one of our seven great national pastimes — cricket, football, rowing, tennis, athletics, cycling, or golf. Half a century ago not one of these was deemed of more than transient interest to anybody above the age of a schoolboy, and still less of being a factor of national prosperity. Even golf, which has only become well known south of the Tweed within the last few years, must be an enormous contributor to the circulation of money, must be associated with the welfare of thousands of families, and, as in the case of only one other sport (cycling), has actually wrought an appreciable change in the aspect of the country itself, inasmuch as it has rescued from inevitable decay more than one English town, and rendered available for man's use great stretches of land which would otherwise have remained solitary and unprofitable.

This process of the resuscitation of a town by an influence which, not so long ago, was actually regarded as evil, is exceedingly interesting, and, so far as we know, has no parallel at any other period of history. As a rule, when a town begins to sink, no human efforts can restore it. There are watering-places which have lost prestige, and which no royal patronage, no puffing, no local enterprise, no builder's genius has been able to restore to their former glory. There are ports to which, once they have been deserted by the current of commerce, no amount of dock and pier and warehouse building can restore their old importance. In a happy hour some enthusiastic golfer discovers that the land in the neighbourhood of the faded watering-place or the decayed port is admirably adapted to his requirements. A club is formed, the land is rented, local labour is employed in the laying out of the links; the players come down, so do their sisters and wives, and cousins and aunts; houses spring up, the old-world inn blossoms forth as a grand hotel, the local tradesmen have something more to do than to stand sunning themselves at their shop doors—in short, a new flow of life sets in, and the old place once more holds up its head.

Those who remember what Sandwich was before the St George's Club came to utilise the stretches of grass and sand which surround it will appreciate these remarks—as also those who knew New Romney before Littlestone was anything but a geographical speck. But such folks are few, not because it is so long ago, but because places like Sandwich and New Romney were, until five or six years ago, the peculiar property of a few antiquaries and artists. And, be it noted, golf has but recently become a popular pastime in the literal sense of the phrase; till of late it was but the recreation of a comparatively small section of the community.

It is when we consider an essentially popular pastime that the influence upon trade is seen to be the most remarkable. If we take cycling, for instance, we find that not only has it created an industry which must give support to many thousands of workpeople, not only has it done for Coventry what golf has done for Sandwich and New Romney—for when the ribbon trade left Coventry there was nothing but ruin before it; but it has poured fresh, vigorous blood through what were, before the era of railways, the very arteries and veins of our country—the high-roads and by-roads. Just think what this single act of reviving an old road means. Choose any favourite wheelmen's road and try to remember what it was a quarter of a century ago. Take the Great North Road. Except upon market days, one might have travelled any fifty miles along it between Highgate and York without meeting fifty people. The famous old inns were in the condition of the 'Dolphin's Head, by J. Mellows,' as described by Dickens in his capacity as an uncommercial traveller. Towns which literally lived by the road had drifted into a helplessly somnolent condition, from which no apparent human agency could awaken them, and the stranger thereto was stared at as much as if he had been a Highlander or an Iroquois in full war-paint. The highway itself, being of no particular value to anybody since the Great Northern Railway began to whirl the old patrons of the road along at forty-five miles an hour, was allowed to decay, and in wet seasons or snowy weather was well-nigh impassable.

The rage for wheeling produced a rapid transformation. Station yourself at any point you like, and try to count the machines which pass on a fine Saturday afternoon during the course of an hour, and you will soon abandon the task as hopeless. Then, consider that every rider of every machine spends something during his trip, even if it be but the cost of a temperance drink: consider that a very large number of Saturday riders sleep out and make good meals during their journey; that they are constantly spending something over and above their actual travelling expenses; that the wonderful extension of our acquaintance with our own country resulting from these peaceful invasions of it by the inhabitants, not merely of the Metropolis, but of every city and considerable town in the land, has led to the refurbishing up of such local-lions as the castle, or the abbey, or the great Somebody's birthplace, or the waterfall, or the view (the inspection of all of which means the expenditure of money), and an approximate idea may be gained of the influence upon national trade which this pastime alone exercises.

What cycling and golf have done for our inland roads and decayed towns and watering-places, rowing has done for our rivers.

The instance of the Thames naturally presents itself first to the mind. Half a century ago, mention of rowing on the Thames was chiefly associated with the river about Hampton Court, Richmond and Windsor, and faintly with Henley. Above Henley one might rusticate at ease, and not the least charm of such rustication was the simple, homely accommodation afforded by the river-side inn. Men who had rowed from Oxford to London were regarded as having performed a feat; and the number of men who made the river their recreation world during the summer, the number of people who owned river-side houses, and the number of people who owned houseboats, was very inconsiderable.

Nowadays the Thames runs through a world of toilers whose earnings depend entirely upon the pleasure traffic on the river; and the amount of money taken during an average English summer by boat and oar makers, watermen, loafers, innkeepers, lodging-house keepers, town and village tradesmen, and the Thames Conservancy, in the shape of boat-rents and lock-dues, would amaze the statistician. To this should be added, in a general survey of the development of this particular pastime, the increased value of river-side land, and the money which has found its way into the pockets of landowners and builders.

It is only by recalling the state of things so short a time ago as half a century, that we are able fairly to realise what this one pastime has done for the trade of the country, especially when we consider that what is true of the Thames is true of every river which offers even but moderate facilities for boating.

That most universal of all our English pastimes, lawn-tennis—unknown little more than a quarter of a century ago—has now a claim to rank amongst the first of those which materially influence the trade of the country. If we only consider that nearly every house in Great Britain to which is attached a piece of lawn large enough for the game, has its net and its balls and its rackets, the size of the industry created by the invention of the game can be somewhat appreciated. If we go further, and remember that all through India, and Australia, and Canada, in the farthest East and the remotest West, in the islands of every ocean, in the cities and ports of both coasts of South America, and in every part of Europe whither the Briton resorts, the game is played, and the materials for it are shipped from the old country, the only word applicable to the volume of trade thereby developed is 'enormous.'

We may pass athletic sports without comment, as the remarks applicable to the foregoing pastimes are equally relevant to them, and we come to what may be termed the typically national pastimes of our country—cricket and football. Until the beginning of the present century cricket was essentially the game of the people. When George IV. played the game on the Steyne at Brighthelmstone, about the year 1782, that *cachet* was given to it which made Strutt say, in 1834, that 'it is become exceedingly fashionable, being much countenanced by the nobility and gentlemen of fortune;' although it was some years before it became recognised as a national or practically universal pastime. Schoolboys, idle men of means, and the peasantry played, but the great mass of Englishmen, the upper middle class, still stood aloof from it. Even when the counties began to measure strength with each other, it was limited to Kent, Surrey, Sussex, and Hampshire; and it was not until within the last half-century that the midland and northern counties adopted it.

Cricket, as played by many, cannot be accounted an inexpensive pastime. With the exception of golf, indeed, it may be considered the most expensive—it being understood that this paper deals with pastimes proper, and not with sports like hunting, shooting, and fishing. It is, of course, impossible to calculate the average cost of a cricket season to an individual gentleman, including his paraphernalia, his club subscription, his travelling, luncheon, and incidental expenses; but it may be estimated that the daily cost of a match played, even at but a moderate distance from home, cannot be much less than ten shillings.

We may then form some notion of the powerful influence of cricket upon the national trade: the thousands of gentlemen who are playing north, south, east, and west, certainly one day in every week, and very often more, during five months of the year; the large army of ministers to the game—the manufacturers of cricket materials, the ground men, the hundreds of professionals, the caterers, the large number of men and boys who live somehow by the game. We must remember that cricket is played in every town, and in a very large proportion of the villages of England, at any rate every Saturday during the season; that the Metropolis alone cannot provide sufficient space for its players, and that suburban clubs are ready to pay almost fancy prices for good and convenient grounds. We must remember also that cricket has become a feature of the educational curriculum of every school in England, so that, in a school of five hundred boys, not fifty will be found who do not possess cricket outfits of their own.

Add to all this, that although Australia makes her own cricket materials to some extent, the articles requisite for the game are sent out by home manufacturers to every place where the game is played—in other words, to all parts of the world.

If cricket has but comparatively recently become an universal national pastime, it is an old favourite compared with football. Until well towards the middle of this century, the only football played in England was at some, not all, of the public schools, by the Irishmen in Copenhagen Fields, at some village fairs, and, in accordance with an ancient Shrovetide custom, at such places as Kingston-on-Thames, Chester-le-Street, Bishop Auckland, and Chester; and it was played in so simple a fashion, and with such crude materials, that there can hardly be supposed to have been any industry worthy of consideration depending upon it.

Strutt, writing in 1834, says: 'It was formerly much in vogue among the common people of England, though of late years it seems to have fallen into disrepute, and is but little practised.'

About the middle of this century the game spread from the public schools into the upper and middle class world—no doubt carried there by old boys of Tom Brown's type; and after 1870 it developed by amazing strides into being what it now is—not merely the pastime, but the rage of both classes and masses, more especially of the masses.

In itself football is the most inexpensive of pastimes, but more money is put into circulation by a big north country or midland football match than by any but the very biggest cricket matches. Taking the first half-dozen matches played in the north, as recorded in one

Monday morning paper, I added the total of spectators as being fifty thousand, every man of whom had paid for admission to the grounds, very many of whom had travelled long distances to see the matches, and most of whom, it may be believed, spent some money in incidental expenses.

The influence of football upon the traffic of railway companies alone must be enormous. Football may be considered a literally more popular game than cricket for two important reasons. First, it appeals far more to the sympathies and the understanding of non-players than does cricket. Second, the crowd gets a *multum in parvo* for its money—a good deal compressed into a conveniently short space of time. The popularity of cricket, from a spectatorial point of view, is limited to three classes of people—players, old players, and picnickers. Hence, ten thousand is a very big 'gate' for even a first-class county match; whereas every Saturday, in the north or midlands of England, there is tolerably sure to be at any rate one football fixture which draws as many people as have made the record attendance at Kennington Oval on the occasion of an England and Australia cricket match. Distance and cost are no obstacle to the frantically enthusiastic partisans of a north country or midland football club: a cup tie will bring excursion trains laden with people from all parts of the country, and these excursions are, it is hardly necessary to say, very rarely undertaken in an economical spirit.

On the other hand, it must be candidly admitted that, great as are the benefits to trade arising from this football mania, there is great danger of the fulfilment of the fears expressed by the *Gentleman's Magazine* correspondent of 1743 with regard to the popularisation of cricket. North country and midland employers of labour have been driven to recognise the fact that the world of their men from the beginning of September to the beginning of May is the world of football. Rather than miss a good match, these men readily sacrifice a day's pay. Immense sums of money change hands over every game, and the mere fact that the players of nearly all our northern association clubs are imported strangers, stamps the game at once as partaking far more of the character of a business than of a pastime, and a business in which the public has as large an interest as the promoters.

This is certainly not as it should be; the game which actually supplants business in the minds of many hundreds of thousands of a nation's population not only ceases to be a pastime, but must sooner or later bring about an actual catastrophe. The base-ball rage in the United States is occupying very seriously the minds of social economists, who view the strides with which it is advancing, and the essentially commercial character with which it is becoming invested, as likely to exercise an unwholesome influence upon the morals and business aptitude of the rising generation. Business in Spain is absolutely subservient to the bull-ring, the result being that the proportion of the trade of the world shared by Spain is infinitesimal.

But no healthier influence can be brought to bear upon a nation's trade than that of a wholesome, genuine pastime; and as, since the spread of pastimes, there is no sign that aptitude for business has degenerated, it is a connection upon which we may sincerely congratulate ourselves.

'SEVEN-UP' BLAINE'S CONVERSION.

CHAPTER I.—THE BLAINE-HINGSTON FEUD.

TWENTY years ago, in the north-west corner of Arizona, not very far from the Grand Cañon, there existed the Pueblo de la Santissima Maria de los Unicomwicosowas, a Franciscan mission station—a rather extensive name for a community of some five or six score souls. The *pueblo*—an ugly, three-storeyed *adobe* building, with its pleasant sunny *plaza* surrounded by olive-trees—still exists, though the number of its inhabitants has dwindled down to a mere handful of shiftless, spiritless, semi-civilised Indians and half-breeds, whose moral and religious welfare is overlooked—literally overlooked—by a sleepy old Spanish *padre*. Since the discovery of silver in the immediate locality, however, the importance of the *pueblo*—if it ever really had any, which is doubtful—has rapidly faded into comparative insignificance beside the growing popularity of the mining settlement which has sprung up, and that delicious mouthful of a name, 'Pueblo de la Santissima Maria de los Unicomwicosowas,' which it was a positive treat to hear the old *padre* roll his tongue round like a sweet morsel, has been all but completely driven out of the market, so to speak, by the less pretentious one of 'New Denver,' as the embryo city is called.

In some mysterious way, New Denver has escaped the almost universal fate of mining camps blessed with even a moderate slice of luck. In other words, New Denver has never been 'boomed.' Consequently it has never been 'rushed.' At the time of which I wish to speak, which is not many years ago, the place was an incongruous conglomeration of frame-houses, weather-board buildings, and *adobe*, or sun-dried mud, huts. Most villages with which English readers are familiar impress one with the firm belief that they have either been originally built upon the spot they now occupy, or that by the simple process of natural growth they have sprung from the soil in which their foundations are firmly rooted. There was nothing of this sort of thing about New Denver. Taken as a whole, the camp, town, city, or whatever you would care to denominate it, had every appearance of being a job lot of miscellaneous remnants purchased from a second-hand dealer, transported from a distance, and shot promiscuously in a heap out of the wagon that brought it. An irregular furrow ploughed through the disordered mass, up the natural slope, would account for what by courtesy passed muster for the main street. The population would be about fifteen hundred. Of this number perhaps seventy-five per cent. of the male adults were directly interested in silver-mining; a sprinkling got their living honestly in divers other ways; while the remainder was made up of professional gamblers, sharpers, and loafers of a more or less shady character—chiefly more. The most popular building was a gaudily painted wooden establishment in the very centre of the settlement, 'The Straight Flush,' *alias* 'Fowler's Saloon;' the costliest, prettiest—the only pretty one, in fact—and the most luxurious was 'Seven-up' Blaine's residence, which stood some five or six hundred yards apart from the others, and near the *pueblo*.

'Seven-up' Blaine was the strongest man in New Denver, both physically and financially. On the one hand, he had been known to fell a bullock with a single blow of his mighty fist; on the other, he 'owned considerable' in the richest mine in the locality, the 'considerable' in this instance representing three-fifths of the whole mine. But Blaine's sudden accession to wealth had been powerless to wean him from the habits he had so long been accustomed to. The possession of his half-million of dollars made no difference in his mode of life, save that it allowed him to shower every form of indulgence that money could procure on his motherless daughter. His ruling passion was divided between his adoration for his girl, Cynthia, and his inveterate love for the highly intellectual pastime of 'seven-up.' He spent his money lavishly on the former, and just as freely did he spend his leisure time at Fowler's Saloon, playing his favourite game with any and sundry who could be prevailed upon to play with him. For the rest, Blaine was a thickset, square-built man of forty-two, who could carry his liquor, curse, and fight with any rough in the Western States; and not only *could*, but occasionally actually *did* take a hand in these innocent forms of recreation, much to pretty Cynthia's sorrow and disgust. Great as was the girl's influence in some directions over her doting parent, it was powerless to entirely eradicate from him those vices which through long usage had become to him a second nature. His disposition was a complex one, in which violent likes and dislikes, often prompted by the most unlikely causes, played no unimportant part; and I need only mention that his whole life from infancy upwards had been spent in mining centres, to indicate the richness and variety of his vocabulary of slang.

One morning a prominent citizen of New Denver, who had known Blaine well in the earlier Californian days, and was, consequently, fairly intimate with his family history, sauntered into Fowler's Saloon, and, ordering a whisky-skin, lounged over to the corner where 'Seven-up,' along with Colonel Jefferson and Kansas Simmonds, was manipulating the inevitable pasteboards.

'Say, Blaine,' he observed casually, when the hand had been played; 'wot was the front name o' that galoot wot struck it rich at Snapper's Flat, an' streaked it back east with his pile? I disremember just now; but warn't it Abner—Abner Hingston?'

The remark had an electrical effect on the man to whom it was addressed. He dropped the cards he was shuffling for a fresh deal, and faced round with a savage gleam in his eye.

'Abner Hingston it was—you kin put yer gum-boots on thet!' he exclaimed hotly; 'an' it jest gravels me like tarnation to hear the durned skunk's name mentioned! 'Twas Abner Hingston's brother, Pete, ez started the Blaine-Hingston row. That was in '53, along of a leetle argyment consekens of a friendly hand at keerds. Which I hev heearn say ez how ole man Blaine was mighty hefty with the derringer, but didn't hev no sorter chance of a show, so to speak, consekens of Hingston drawin' iron an' layin' him out afore he'd time to call his hand. In course I was only an infant then, an' couldn't take a hand nohow in these-yer games, but mam, she got married agen—got hitched up to 'Lish Jacobson. 'Lish tuk up the feud on behalf of the widder, an' bein' a rustler on the fight, an' likewise the wust son of a thief with a bowie-knife that ever drawed breath, he swore he'd drap a slice o' liver with this-yer Pete Hingston ef so be ez ever he sot eyes on him. Which it would be about ten years arter thet we fetched up at Snapper's Flat with the rush, an' the day arter we got thar, I was down to Potter's Bar with a message for 'Lish, when in meanders Hingston permiscus-like. I knowed him in a minute. "Thet's him!" I whispered to 'Lish. "Thet's the bloomin' shrub wot stretched dad!" 'Lish smoked me instanter, an' went fur his bowie-knife, but Hingston see'd his blind an' straddled it, an' reached for his'n, an' they peeled an' jest went in bald-headed.

'By gosh, my gentle gazelles!' went on Blaine, temporarily forgetting his indignation, and waxing eloquent as the incidents of the scene came vividly back to him; 'you'd jest hev admired to see them two tiger-cats go fur one another! He was a bully boy with a glass eye was 'Lish, an' Pete, he warn't no slouch. It was worth shucks, I kin tell you, to seen 'em skirmishin' round an' layin' fur to git a holt. They was on it like Injuns, an' fit like Apache braves, an' nary a one let up till they both drapped—'Lish with his gullet slit, an' Pete with 'Lish's knife up to the heft in his ribs. I *do* think ez how 'Lish hed the best of it ef you reckoned it up by p'ints, but, howsomever, *thet* didn't amount to the vally of a yaller pup, fur they'd both passed in their chips. Anyhow, everybody ez see'd it allowed ez how it was the purtiest bit of scientific carving *they* ever seen. The sheriff was thar the hull of the time, so thar warn't no durned nonsense 'bout gittin' the thing settled all on the squar, an' accordin' to law. They h'isted the stiffs on to the counter, an' drummed up a jury thar an' then from amongst the spectators, an' they brought in a verdict of "Died from natural causes," which everybody allowed was the only call a sensible jury could make with sech a hand.

'Wal,' he continued cheerfully, 'when the ole woman heerd ez how 'Lish hed handed in his checks, she was tuk alloverish suddent-like with a pesky bad fit of the shivers. They sed ez how the shock hed acted on a weak heart an' she was a gone coon. Howsomever, afore she throwed up the sponge, she pulled herself together an' motioned me to her, an' she sed, with a guggle in her voice—jest ez she mighter been washin' off tailin's in her innards an' spit her chin-music up through the slush—sez she, "Ed'ard Wilkerson Blaine, thar ain't on'y one Hingston (which it is Abner) an' on'y one Blaine (which it is you) left to carry on this-yer feud. You're on'y a boy yit, but I want you to promise me thet when you grow up you'll whip this-yer last skunk of a Hingston off the face of the airth. Thar's two of our side been laid out—yer father an' 'Lish—an' on'y one o' them. So, d'yer see, countin' corpses they're one ahead of us, an' it gravels yer pore ole mother to think of it. Remember *thet* when the time comes fur you to stan' up agen Abner fur the reputashun of the family! Don't let him git the drop on yer, fur then they'll hev scooped the hull pool! Jest waltz in fur all you're worth, an' make honours easy! D'yer savvy [understand]?"—"I reckon I git yer drift, an' I'm on it," I blubbered. Arter thet she kinder caved in, an' turned sorter greenish—yaller—gray, like a alligator sick wi' the janders. Afore sun-up she had checked her trumps to thet bourne from which no feller never streaks it back, ez Parson Hoskins used to say, an' we planted her up on the slope, back of Snapper's Flat, in the sandy sile whar it was purty dry lyin', alongside of whar they'd bunched Pete an' 'Lish inter the same shaft.

'Jest about thet time—mebbe in the fall of the same year, or the spring of the next—this-yer Abner struck a reg'lar jeweller's shop an' hunched it back over the plains with more chips'n a mule could tote; an' I hev heearn tell ez how he sot up fur a bang-up swell in New York. I never sot eyes on him since, an' the Hingstons is still one stiff ahead on us. Mebbe I ain't so plaguey tetchy on thet p'int ez the ole woman was, but the last wishes of the departed orter be respected ez sacred, an' I would hev played the hand out ef I hedn't sold a claim. Which I might hev follered his trail down east an' wiped him out thar. Howsomever, it ain't no use buckin' agen Providence. In all them years ez is past, from thet day to when we lit on the lode here, flush times was skurse. Times I was nearly busted—times I was wall-broke an' couldn't raise a red cent nohow. So, d'yer see, thar warn't no help fur it—onless, in course, I'd lit out an' hoofed it all the way across the plains an' the Rockies, which I didn't kinder take to thet idea. Beside, wot with their police-patrols bossin' the percession, an' their onreasonable way of administratin' the law—not to mention their tarnation queer an' onconvenient way of treatin' a boy ez has killed his man in a fa'r fight wuss nor a ornery hoss-thief—it kinder 'peared to me thet the climate o' these-yer Yankee parts wouldn't suit a guileless child o' nature ez was layin' with a gun an' a bowie-knife to settle a family grievance. But, boys, hear me,' he went on softly, with a meditative smile rippling gently round the corners of his mouth; 'I ain't forgot the last dyin' legacy of a lovin' parient, an' ef ever Abner Hingston comes out west agen, an' I strike his trail, thar'll be the all-firedest, bulliest merry-Moses of a shindy you ever heearn tell on!'

A short silence ensued, during which 'Seven-up' Blaine was chewing the toothsome cud of anticipatory vengeance and triumph, while his auditors pictured to themselves the sanguinary delights of the half-promised treat. Suddenly he recollected the circumstances that had led him into this long digression. The smile vanished, and turning to the man who had broached the Hingston theme, he demanded curiously: 'Wot you mean, Phil? Say, this-yer son of a swab of a Abner Hingston ain't hustlin' his stumps round these parts agen, air he?'

'I reckon Abner hez quit hustlin' his stumps round any parts. He's dead.'

'Gosh! You don't say! One stiff ahead on us, an' now Abner hez gone up the flume, an' thar ain't no sorter chance fur me to git even with 'em! The Blaines don't 'pear to hev no luck with this-yer feud!' exclaimed the sole representative of that family, as he cocked one eye to take a long shot at the spittoon, and expectorated. Then he absently coaxed one corner of his tangled beard into his mouth and chewed it thoughtfully.

'You're throwin' up yer keerds afore you know wot you've got in yer hand, Blaine,' broke in Phil. 'Mebbe you never heerd thet soon'z he got back to New York, Abner tuk up with a Brooklyn gal an' spliced her. She died, too, six-an'-twenty year since, in givin' birth to a kid—a boy—an' Abner never married agen. While back he tuk to speculatin' in railroads. Did purty middlin' at fust, till he tuk up the Oklahoma an' Saintsville scheme, an' was so dead sartin of it turnin' up trumps thet he went his hull pile on it—an' busted! Thet's wot killed him. Howsomever, thar's this-yer whelp—his son—left yit.'

'Whar the tarnal you heearn all this-yer palaver, Phil?' inquired Blaine with no little astonishment. 'You kem in by the las' night's stage from Quartz Rock, didn't you?—heearn it thar?'

'No.'

'Then, mebbe, you lit on some galoot at Fortyfoot ez had tracked out lately an' brought the news?'

'You're off it agen—an' yit you're on it. I rid alongside this-yer Abner Hingston's son on the stage, blamed ef I didn't! He got off the keers at Quartz Rock an' jined the stage, an' we dumped him down at Fortyfoot. A long-spliced, lanky innercent—looked like'z he might be a college-sharp—with a biled shirt an' a claw-hammer coat; an' his hair parted down the middle an' fixed up in bangs on his forehead like a gal's. When he ketched on thet I knowed his dad way back at Snapper's Flat, he spits out the hull family history ez I've telled it you uns, an' sez ez how he had come out to locate in these-yer parts for a spell; though it *do* 'pear to me ez how the climate'll be a durned sight too hot for him.'

'Which he won't hev no sorter chance to speak on of gittin' used to it,' deliberately added 'Seven-up,' as he drew his bowie-knife from his boot and tested the edge carefully with his thumb before returning it.

Nobody spoke, but every eye was turned curiously on Blaine. Just then the driver of the stage came in, whip in hand, and called for 'three fingers of the divine fluid.'

'When you haul out the Noah's Ark, Jim?' demanded Blaine.

'They're puttin' the hosses in now,' replied the driver, gulping down his whisky and turning to the door.

'Then you kin put me in the way-bill fur a outside ez fur as Fortyfoot,' Blaine said.

'Wot! Air you on the slay?' inquired Kansas Simmonds.

'Yes, on the war-path! I've chawed the hull thing over in my mind—put it through the sluices an' piped it off, an' it pans out like this: Wot's this-yer young Hingston doin' browsin' round these parts ef he ain't prospectin' round to git the drop on me? It ain't onreasonable to s'pose he's inherited his share of the feud, an' hates the name of Blaine like pisen. Mebbe he's jest dyin' fur a fight, an' ef thet's so, I ain't onwillin' to accommodate him every time. But, mebbe he ain't aware ez how Ed'ard Wilkerson Blaine is a citizen of this-yer community, an' ef *thet's* so, then it's wot I calls a speshul providence to enable a pore, lone orphan to pufform his sacred legacy an' make honours easy.'

'Bust me, Blaine! you ain't a-goin' to murder this-yer young innercent ez mebbe never toted a derringer in his life, an don't know the difference atween a bowie-knife an' a bull-pup, air you?' interposed Colonel Jefferson.

'You jest hold yer hosses a minit, cun'l. Ez fur ez I savvy, 'cordin' to the law of Arizona thar ain't no sech thing ez murder 'bout wipin' a galoot offen the face of the airth in a family feud—'speshully when the other side's a stiff ahead on you. 'Tain't murder; it's justice, an' don't you forgit it. No, cun'l,' he said proudly, drawing himself to his full height, and thrusting out his massive chest; 'I reckon thar ain't no man high-toneder in the mines'n Ed'ard Wilkerson Blaine, an' I don't allow to hold with no murderin' or sech-like pesky low games, but you kin bet yer sweet life this-yer durned skunk of a Hingston'll wrastle his hash in kingdom come afore another daylight! Mebbe I never went to spellin'-school, an' mebbe I couldn't straddle some o' these-yer knotty p'ints in book-larnin', but I *do* know a straight flush when I hev one dealt me, an' I ain't sech a blamed, copper-plated idjet ez to fly in the face of a speshul providence!'

As he finished speaking, Blaine left the saloon and climbed up to the box-seat of the stage, which was by that time on the point of starting. The other passengers were all aboard. Jim cracked his whip, and the huge machine jolted and rattled its way down the street, followed by the gaze of the loungers who had left the bar to group themselves at the door.

Phil was heard to chuckle softly to himself as the stage disappeared down the slope, and the sound of that 'audible smile' attracted attention.

'You ain't been playin' it off on "Seven-up" Blaine, Phil, hev you?' remarked Kansas Simmonds inquiringly.

'No, I ain't,' grinned Phil. 'Howsomever, I guess thar won't be no gore spilled this trip. All I telled him was on the squar', but somehow I didn't jest recollect to tell him thet'——

Here Phil's voice dropped to a serio-comic whisper, which was quite inaudible to all save those to whom it was immediately addressed. A look of blank, incredible astonishment took possession of the features of the little circle of interested listeners; a look that passed by gentle, imperceptible stages into a beaming smile; a smile that quickly widened into a grin so broad that it went all round, so to speak, and wrapped over, and there was sufficient of the material left over to mend with; a grin that grew and grew until it burst all restraint and culminated in a wild, uncontrollable roar of laughter.

'Great snakes!' gasped Colonel Jefferson, who was the first to recover himself sufficiently to speak. 'Durn me ef this don't lay over anything I ever heearn! Let's liquor, boys! Wot's yer pisen, Phil?'

Blaine's picturesque account of the origin and progress of the feud was, taking into consideration the fact that the narrator was a prejudiced party, fairly accurate. The prime actors in the affair were 'forty-niners of the most approved stamp—hard workers, hard swearers, hard drinkers, and inveterate gamblers. On the day of the inauguration of the feud they had met in a Sacramento gambling-hell to play euchre. Blaine lost heavily, and for a while bore his reverses with fortitude, only drinking harder and cursing louder, as was becoming to a self-respecting 'forty-niner, until, immediately after a fresh deal, the casual overturning of the table discovered the knave of spades serenely reposing on Hingston's knee, and that card chanced to be the right bower. Perhaps it was pure accident that had put the card there—such things have been known to occur—but Blaine did not seem to see it in that light. In the heat of the instant he acted with a lamentable lack of prudence he would in calmer moments have blushed to own to. He vehemently accused his man of deliberate cheating, without adopting the usual precautionary method, then in almost daily vogue, of shooting him dead first. It was the omission of a mere detail, yet, though he only survived a few minutes, Blaine lived just long enough to regret it.

A FAMOUS PORCELAIN.

One of the most artistic and interesting industries in this country is the manufacture of porcelain in the ancient city of Worcester. There is no special local reason for the establishment of such works there, but Worcester has been noted as the home of the famous porcelain for more than a century. It was in 1751 that Dr Wall, a chemist and artist, completed his experiment in the combination of various elements, and produced a porcelain which was more like the true or natural Chinese porcelain than any ever devised. This was the more remarkable because kaolin had not then been discovered in this country. The inventor set up his factory in Worcester, close to the cathedral, and for a long time he produced his eggshell and Tonquin porcelain in various forms, chiefly, however, those of table services. Transfer-printing was introduced later on, and was executed with much of the artist's spirit by experts who attached themselves to the Worcester works after the closing of the enamel works at Battersea. It was a remarkable century in its devotion to ceramic art; and it was characteristic of the ruling princes of the Continent that they should patronise lavishly various potteries of more or less repute. Towards the end of the century the first sign of this royal favour was vouchsafed to Worcester. George III. visited the factories, and under the impetus given by his patronage, the wares of the city advanced so much in popularity that in the early part of this century, it is said, there were few noble families which had not in their china closets an elaborate service of Worcester, bearing the family arms and motto in appropriate emblazonment. In 1811, George IV. being then Prince Regent, several splendid services of Worcester porcelain were ordered to equip his table for the new social duties entailed by his regency, and one of these alone cost £4000. In the museums at the Worcester works there are specimens of many beautiful services, designed in accordance with the contemporary ideas of pomp and stateliness. The porcelain artists in those days must have been well versed in heraldry; for their chief duties seem to have been the reproduction of crests and coats-of-arms. Some of the services have interesting stories. There is one of deep royal blue, beautifully decorated, and bearing in the centre an emblematical figure of Hope. The story ran that it was ordered by Nelson for presentation to the Duke of Cumberland, and that the figure of Hope was really a portrait of Lady Hamilton. This, however, was an error: the service was ordered by the Duke himself in the ordinary way, and though Lord Nelson did order a service of Worcester porcelain, he died before it could be completed, and it was afterwards dispersed. Another story attaches to a plate adorned with a picture of a ship in full sail approaching harbour. The Imaum of Muscat sent many presents to the Prince Regent, and hinted that he would like a ship of war in return. The English authorities, however, did not see fit to give attention to this request, and sent him instead many beautiful things, including a service of Worcester ware, bearing on each piece a scene showing the royal yacht which bore the gifts, entering the cove of Muscat. When the potentate heard, however, that his dearest wish had been thwarted in this way, he refused to allow the vessel to enter the harbour, and all the presents had to be brought back again. The picture on the plate, therefore, is more imaginative than accurate.

The Worcester porcelain began to develop in fresh directions soon after the Great Exhibition of 1851, which gave an impulse to the efforts of the artists, and the decorative side of the work was brought into a much more prominent position. For instance, the 'Worcester enamels,' in the style of those of Limoges, were introduced, and an illustration of this work is to be seen in a pair of remarkable vases, bearing enamel reproductions of Maclise's drawings, founded on the Bayeux tapestries. About this time, too, after several years of experiment, the ivory ware—an idea inspired by the lovely ivory sculptures in the Exhibition—was brought to perfection. It is a beautiful, creamy, translucent porcelain, singularly fitted for artistic treatment, and it is now the most characteristic of the later developments of the Worcester work. In fact, the art directors of the enterprise will not issue now any new wares in the style of those which found favour at an earlier period, for they know that they would instantly be palmed off on the unwary as the genuine products of the bygone times.

To trace the process of the manufacture, from the mixing of the ingredients to the burning of the last wash in the decorated piece, is very interesting. It is a process freely shown to visitors, and forms one of the principal lions in the sober old town which has lain for so many centuries on the banks of the Severn. The materials are brought from all parts of the world. Kaolin, or china clay, which is the felspar of decomposed granite washed from the rocks, is brought from Cornwall, so is the Cornish or china stone; felspar is brought from Sweden, and though of a rich red, it turns white when burnt; marl and fire-clay come from Broseley, in Shropshire, and Stourbridge; flints are brought from Dieppe; and bones—those of the ox only—come all the way from South America to be calcined and ground down. The grinding is a slow matter; each ingredient is ground separately, in a vat, the bottom of which is a hard stone, whereon other hard stones of great weight revolve slowly. From twelve hours' to ten days' constant treatment by these remorseless mills is required by the various materials, some needing to be ground much longer than others before the requisite fineness is attained. It is essential that all the ingredients should be reduced to a certain standard of grain; and the contents of each vat must pass through a lawn sieve with four thousand meshes to the square inch. When the materials are sufficiently ground to meet this test, they are taken to the 'slip-house,' and mixed together, with the clays, which do not need grinding. A magnet of great strength is in each mixing trough, and draws to itself every particle of iron, which, if allowed to remain in the mixture, would injure the ware very much. When properly mixed, the water is pressed out, and the paste or clay is beaten so that it may obtain consistency. Then it is ready to be made into the many shapes which find popular favour.

The process of manufacture depends on the shape to be obtained. A plain circular teacup may be cast on a potter's wheel of the ancient kind. When it is partly dried in a mould, it is turned on a lathe and trimmed; then the handle, which has been moulded, is affixed with a touch of the 'slip'—the porcelain paste in a state of dilution is the cement used in all such situations—and the piece is ready for the fire. A plate, or saucer, however, is made by flat pressing; a piece of clay like a pancake is laid on the mould, which is set revolving on a wheel; the deft fingers of the workmen press the clay to the proper shape, and it is then dried. But the elaborate ornamental pieces of graceful design are made in moulds, and for this process the clay is used in the thin or 'slip' state. The moulds are pressed together, the slip is poured into them through a hole in one side, and when the moisture has been absorbed by the plaster moulds sufficiently, the piece is taken out. It is often necessary, in making a large or complicated piece, to have as many as twenty or thirty castings. In moulding a figure, for instance, the legs and arms and hands, even the thumbs in many cases, are cast separately, and with many other parts of the design are laid before a workman, who carefully builds up the complete figure out of the apparent chaos of parts, affixing each piece to the body with a touch of slip. When these wares are complete, they have to be fired for the first time; and they are taken to a kiln, and placed with great care and many precautions in the grim interior. The contraction of the clay under fire is a matter to which the designers must give much study; and the change which takes place during forty hours' fierce firing in the kiln is shown by contrasting an unburnt piece and a piece of 'biscuit' or burnt ware, and marking the shrinkage. Your ware must be calculated to shrink only so much; if it shrink a shade further, the whole process may be spoiled. There is a loss of twenty-five per cent. sometimes in these kilns, in spite of the assiduous care of the workmen. When the biscuit ware has cooled, it is dipped in the glaze, which is a compound of lead and borax and other materials—virtually a sort of glass—and then it is fired for sixteen hours in the 'glost oven.' There is no contraction in this ordeal; but there is a risk none the less from other causes. In fact, there is the danger of injury every time the ware goes to the fire, and as the highly decorated pieces have to go to the kiln many times, it may be inferred that the labour of weeks and even months is sometimes nullified by an untoward accident in the burning.

It is during the process of decoration that the ornate vases and figures make so many trips to the fire. The artist department is a very large and important one. The designers, however, are a class of themselves. They project the idea; it is the business of the artist, in these circumstances, to execute it. The painters are taken into the works as lads and trained for the special service. What you remark chiefly in going through the decorating rooms is the great facility of the artists. You see a man with a plate or vase on which he is outlining a landscape, and you marvel at the rapid, accurate touches with which he does the work. Flowers, birds, and figures they can reproduce with great skill, and many of them are artists not merely in facility but in instinct. They work with metallic colours only. They rely on copper, for instance, to give black and green, on iron to yield red hues, and so on; and the gold work is done with what seems to be a dirty brown paste, but is really pure gold mixed with flux and quicksilver. When the first wash is put on, the piece must be fired, so that the colours shall be burnt into the glaze. Then it returns to the painter, who adds the next touches so far as he can; the firing again follows; the piece is returned to him once more; and so on it goes till the work is complete.

It is therefore a highly technical business, especially as the colours change very much in the fire, and the painter has to work with full knowledge of the chemical processes in every firing. There is one form of the decorative process which is very singular—that is, the piercing work. The artist has the vase in the dried state before the firing, and with a tiny, sharp-pointed knife he cuts out little pieces according to the design in his mind, and produces an extremely beautiful perforated ware, the elaborate pattern and the lacelike delicacy of which almost repel the idea that the work is done by the unaided hand of man. In the colour processes, the work is virtually complete when the dull gold has been burnished; and the porcelain is then ready to be transferred to the showrooms, or exported to America, which is the greatest patron, at present, of Worcester art. America, however, failed to retain one lovely vase no less than four feet high, the largest ever made in the works; it was taken to the Chicago Exhibition and back without accident, and was then sold in England for one thousand pounds. It is important to remember the distinction between 'pottery' and 'porcelain:' the porcelain is clay purified by the fire, whereas pottery leaves the oven as it entered it—clay. The purification of the ware is really an illustration of the process which sustains the artistic inspiration of the work. The gross, the vulgar, the mean are eliminated; a standard of beauty is set up, and to it every article must conform. It is to this ideal, sustained by a long succession of artists through a century and a half, that Worcester owes its world-wide reputation as the birthplace of some of the loveliest porcelain ever burnt in a kiln.

THE FORGED MADONNA.

CHAPTER III.

Whatever mysteries attended the further preparation of the picture were known only to 'Tonelli. He it was who had fetched it away, and he alone saw it for the next two days, until when quite finished, and he compared the two together, he had an inspiration as to the proposed fraud.

At the outset, as he had told Maynard, he had fully proposed—without consulting the owners, it is perhaps needless to observe—substituting the copy for the original over the altar of 'The Sacred Heart;' but when he saw how exact was the duplicate, nay, while preserving the likeness, how infinitely it surpassed the original in the wonderful tenderness and ineffable, yet undefinably haunting, charm of expression—and by comparison reduced the first to almost the level of commonplace—he was more than satisfied, he waxed enthusiastic in his deep, abiding joy.

'Ah! this—this is inspiration. It is great! I did not know he was half so good!'

And straightway he decided, as the American himself would have phrased it, 'to play it off on the stranger.' If an old judge such as himself could not tell the difference—excepting that the new one was if anything the finer picture of the two—he felt perfectly safe in letting it go. No one, unless they saw them side by side, could ever tell; nor even then could say which was the original and which the copy.

'For myself, if I did not know,' he went on thoughtfully, as he put the last touches to the artist's signature, which Maynard had neglected to add, 'I should choose—this, of a certainty.' And on the next day, Monday, the picture was packed and delivered at the American's hotel.

'Cute enough in the main, the Yankee was sufficiently wide awake to know that over pictures he was liable to be done. Hence his device of the private mark. That he had been shown an original in the first instance he had every reason to believe; for he had ascertained that it was not hanging in its place in the little hillside chapel, but had been sent to 'Tonelli's—this, too, before hearing the old man's tale, so that he felt entirely easy as to the result, for: 'I rather guess the old fraud is bound to do somebody over the operation,' he pensively observed; 'but, if I know myself, that somebody shall not be me.'

It so happened that amongst his acquaintance staying at the same hotel was an English doctor, and what he did not know about Art, and those 'early Florentine fellers,' was in the Yankee's eyes 'hardly worth the knowing.' So that, when the packing-case arrived, what more natural than that the one should invite the other to inspect and criticise his latest purchase.

The lid was soon unscrewed and removed to reveal the lovely Madonna securely fastened to the back of the case, ready for its long sea-voyage. And together they admired—or rather, the *nil admirari* American remained cool and neutral, while the more impulsive Englishman grew more and more impassioned and enthusiastic; until he too was silenced before the marvellous spell of those wondrously expressive eyes.

'Wal,' inquired the New Yorker. 'Seems as though you had kinder dried up, and been struck dumb, all at once. What is it?' And he gazed interrogatively at his friend.

'I—hardly—know,' came the slow response. —'But, what a face! And above all, what eyes! They look right down into your inmost soul, and make you repent of every sin you ever contemplated, to say nothing of committed; until you downright are afraid and ashamed to meet them. It is the most marvellous effect I ever saw.'

'Wal, now you mention it, she does seem kinder sad-like and reproachful. So you think it pretty good, eh?'

'Good is no name for it. It's exquisite. You have got hold of a gem, a perfect treasure. Strange, too, how pure and fresh the colours are. It might only have been painted say twenty years, while really it must be'——

'Oh! that's only old Humbug's art. He's what he calls restored it. Why, when I first came across it up yonder, but for the name, I wouldn't have taken the thing at a gift. Not that they would have parted with it, by the way; for I tried 'em with five hundred dollars. But 'Tonelli must have squared 'em somehow. And it's not so bad—eh?'

'Bad! It's magnificent! It's far and away the finest thing you've got. Why can't they paint like that nowadays?'

'Wal, I reckon I'd allow old Del What's-his-name? to paint me and my wife, if only he were alive now. Guess I'd make his fortune over there.' And he nodded vaguely to indicate his native land, while he drew near the picture and passed his hand underneath the frame.

'Mind you don't—I was going to say, smear the colours—but of course that is too absurd—though the varnish really is fresh.—But what is wrong—scratched your finger with a nail?'

'Nail be ——. Here, just hold her steady—so, while I take out the screws.'

'You'd much better leave it alone. It would travel far safer as it is.'

'Travel be'—— But the expletive remained unuttered, for the American had turned the picture round and was closely examining the back, while soon he cried: 'Jumping Moses! If the durned thing is not a fraud—a forgery, after all!'

'A forgery!—why, how do you know?'

And the Yankee explained, whereupon the astonished Englishman set to work to examine it again.

'It certainly is wonderfully clean and fresh, for its age; but do you mean this has been painted since you bought it? Well, all I can say is, if the original is better than this, it must be a masterpiece indeed. While, for the artist who could paint—this'—here he took another long reassuring look before he finished with much emphasis—'spite of the fraud, nothing in the way of fame is too good!'

Even 'Tonelli, wily old campaigner that he was, appeared disconcerted and thrown off his balance when confronted by the two friends; and after being duly challenged with his attempted imposition and told how he had been found out, he was ordered to produce the veritable and undoubted original.

All in vain for him to shrug his shoulders and wax voluble and deprecatory; he could neither wriggle nor shuffle out of the inexorable Yankee's grip, whose threat of appealing to the authorities at the church brought him to his knees, and ended by his producing what he assured them was a very inferior 'copy' indeed. Good enough, perhaps, for such a poor place as—that—but—oh!—far far less beautiful than the great Andrea del Sarto itself.

All this, and more, he poured forth with the air of truth itself, as the unmoved American quietly showed him his own mark, and 'knocked the bottom out of the entire lie;' while the English doctor said never a word, but stood absorbed by the two pictures before him.

Long, long he gazed and noted every detail: each feature was the same; the likeness too was there. Everything but that haunting, searching, wonderful expression; and after satisfying himself of this, in answer to his friend he exclaimed: 'Forgery, or no forgery, I don't care a hang! But if you will take my advice you will stick to the one you've got. I would not change it for double the money.'

Whereat it was the Yankee's turn to 'wade in;' which he did with a great appearance of indignation. 'See here, 'Tony, I must see this forger of yours, the man who painted this—this fraud, and—if there's justice to be had in this played-out old country of yours, I'll'——

'But, signor, I protest, I'——

'There, that will do. Take me where I can see him right away, or I'll make you sorry you ever tried to palm off such a'——

But the mere threat was enough. 'Tonelli promptly agreed. Why not—and why not indeed? for how could it injure him? And if any one must suffer—why not the artist take his share? So did he lead the way forthwith to Maynard's sordid attic studio.

Looking painfully wan and still, almost ghastly in her pallor, Mrs Maynard opened the door herself; and seeing the three together, she seemed at once to guess their errand. With a quite unnatural calm and an unconscious dignity, due to the complete absorption of her grief, she motioned them to enter the room, when, without waiting for any one to speak, she fetched a small box from underneath the bed, and in a tone which her stern self-repression made mechanical and hard, she said: 'Here is the money. It is all here; every penny. Take it, and—go.'

'But the Signor Maynardo,' objected 'Tonelli, prompted by a glance from the rest.

With a still more striking gesture she swept aside the faded rag of a curtain, and pointing to the bed where lay her husband, all white and still, she exclaimed: 'Why seek to revile the dead? Can you not leave us in peace?'

All three were startled; even the American was at a loss. But the English doctor was the first to recover from the shock. Professional instinct came to his aid, and he moved quickly and quietly to the bedside, where he laid his finger on the wrist, then his hand on the heart, and looked in vain for any sign of life; while the other two whispered anxiously apart, to be still more startled presently by a cry from the doctor: 'Get me a mirror, quick!' And holding the glass to the unconscious lips, apparently he was satisfied, for more briskly: 'Now then,' he exclaimed again, 'I want brandy, and flannels, and plenty of hot water.—Hush! Not a moment must be lost! He is not dead, and please God, we'll have him round and well in no time!'

'If that's so, doctor, why then, as sure as I'm a living sinner, the forger of this here Madonna shall wake up to find himself famous.'

And both were as good as their words.

DICE AND DOLASSES.

FEW of those who toss the dice in the once favourite game of backgammon, remember that they are playing a game at least three thousand years old, and that the dice they use are of fabulous antiquity. Apollo taught their use to Hermes, who afterwards presided over the game; but these Greek gods probably brought their knowledge from Egypt, where dice, and it is said even loaded ones, have been found in very ancient tombs. They were known also in Babylon and Chaldea, whilst in Rome gaming with dice seems to have been universal. The Roman emperors and the nobles played for high stakes, but even the austere Cato did not condemn the use of dice as an amusement. The Romans had two sorts of dice, one like those in present use, which were called *tesseræ*, the numbers upon which were written in Roman numerals; and the other *tali*, which were oblong, and only numbered on four sides. A game somewhat similar to backgammon was played with four tali and fifteen counters on each side; the counters were moved according to the throws of the tali. The best throw was called *venus*, when all four tali presented different numbers; and the worst, four aces, called *canes*. In the tali, the deuce and cinque were omitted. A fine specimen of a Roman talus, with markings in double circles, the six being at the end, was found in the old Roman Bath at Bath, and with some dice-boxes may now be seen in the Pump Room in that city. Etruscan tombs have yielded dice, one set of which has become famous. The numbers upon these dice, instead of being the ordinary numerals from one to six, were written in Greek letters. In these Canon Isaac Taylor hoped to find a clue to the lost Etruscan language. The Etruscans, like the Romans, used an alphabet derived from the old Greek one, but their language had no resemblance to Greek, or Latin, or any known tongue; and the few inscriptions they have left, being chiefly monumental, have been puzzles to antiquaries and philologists. The dice upon which Canon Taylor expended much research, would, of course, give the Etruscan numerals up to six; but the difficulty was to ascertain with certainty which of the numbers was denoted by any one of the words. The reconstruction of a language from such very scanty materials is a task of even greater difficulty than Owen's famous reproduction of the moa from a single thigh-bone. Happily, the unexpected discovery of a bilingual inscription on the wrappings of an Egyptian mummy in the museum at Agram will probably greatly facilitate the desired result.

The use of dice is very evidently derived from that universal form of divination, the casting of lots. 'The lot,' says the author of the Book of Proverbs, 'is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord,' and this belief of the Hebrew race is shared by all mankind, whether savage or civilised. The medicine man in South Africa tosses the dolasses of his clients, and prophesies, by the way they fall, in which direction strayed cattle must be sought, or where the thief may be found, or the witch who has caused disease or death. The dolasses used for this purpose among the Kaffirs and Hottentots are not dice, but perhaps the earliest of all divining implements, knuckle-bones, which, under the name of astragali, were used for much the same purpose throughout Europe in Roman times, and are now consigned in a state of survival to the games of children, who still play 'dibs' by tossing knuckle-bones, although without any idea of their ancient use in divination. This game, or one very similar, is illustrated in a terra-cotta group of girls, among the Greek and Roman antiquities in the British Museum. But among the Mashonas a different kind of dolasses are used, somewhat resembling the Roman tali; like them, they are oblong, and consist of four to the set. These are not numbered, but carved in knots and scrolls of different kinds, one especial pattern being a sort of conventional lizard, consisting of parallel zigzag lines, which perhaps may have some connection with rain, as parallel waved lines were used to symbolise water in Egyptian hieroglyphs, and are still so used among the American Indians. Mr Bent, who describes and figures the dolasses of the Mashonas in his book on *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*, says: 'On the evening of the new moon they will seat themselves in a circle, and the village witch-doctor will go round, tossing each man's set of dolasses in the air, and by the way they turn up he will divine the fortune of the owner for the month.'

Three oblong dice, resembling the Roman tali, are used in an old Indian game called *chausar*, being a variant of the still older game known as *pachisi*, which is played with seven cowry-shells. Both these games resemble backgammon, and the latter has been traced by Dr E. B. Tylor to America, where, under the name of *patolli*, it was played by the Mexicans before the conquest, and is still played by some of the North American tribes, beans being used instead of dice. Dr Tylor calls this game, in which the oblong dice, beans, cowry-shells, and perhaps knuckle-bones, sticks, or strips of wood were used, and thrown by hand, lot-backgammon, which he thinks was the most ancient form of the game, afterwards developed into dice-backgammon as at present played.

The Indian pachisi and the Mexican patolli were both played on mats, upon which was drawn a cross divided into squares. The early Spanish writers all describe the game, the eagerness displayed by the players, and the superstitious ceremonies with which it was commenced. The dice are described as black beans, five or ten in number, marked with little white dots. Gamesters are represented as going about with the mat and stones in a little basket under their arms. They would address these things as though they were living beings, offer incense and food to them, and then, after rubbing them awhile in their hands, calling meanwhile upon the god of dice, would throw them upon the mat, give a great clap, and then look to see the points that had come.

From Mexico this game of patolli spread under the same name, but with variations in the number of dice used, and the substances of which they were composed, as far north as the Great Lakes. Sometimes the dice were made of elk-horn cut and polished and blackened on one side, sometimes of peach-stones ground down, sometimes of slips of reed or bits of wood upon which different marks were made in black. 'Lot-backgammon,' says Dr Tylor, 'as represented by tali, pachisi, &c., ranges in the Old World from Egypt across Southern Asia to Burma;' and he believes that the Mexicans received it in some way from Asia, perhaps by the drifting of Asiatic vessels to California, and that from Mexico gambling by lots spread among the ruder tribes of the north-west, who do not, however, use the mat.

The American Indians, like the Chinese and other Eastern nations, are great gamblers, and often at their tribal dances enter into competition with those who come to witness the ceremonies, and win or lose a great portion of their worldly possessions. One of their ancient gambling games was played with marked plum-stones, shaken in a bowl, the numbers of marked stones turning up denoting the winner.

These plum-stones, constituting dice, were much used before the advent of Europeans, but are now almost superseded by cards. One use of them, which seems to have been confined to the Sioux, is described in Yarrow's *Mortuary Customs of the North American Indians* under the name of the 'ghost gamble.'

Upon the death of a wealthy Indian, all his property is divided into small bundles, and at the first feast held in honour of the deceased, an Indian is chosen to represent his ghost. This ghost plays against each of the invited guests singly for the property of the dead, and whoever wins against the ghost takes up a bundle and goes out of the tent, making room for the next player, till the whole of the bundles are disposed of. The plum-stones used are seven in number for women, and eight for men. Two are blackened on one side; two are blackened with spots left in the centre, of the original colour of the stone; two have buffalo heads on one side, and a cross on the reverse; and two represent a crescent on one side, with a long line crossed by six shorter lines on the reverse. Only one of the buffalo heads is used by women. There are six winning throws, and five which entitle to another throw. A bowl appears to be used in throwing the stones.

The use of dice, which we have thus shown to have been universal and very ancient, is now forbidden by law; but an exception is made in the case of the favourite old game of backgammon, in which dice may still be thrown as of old, without fear of legal penalties.

The fascination which games of chance have exercised over gentle and simple is well illustrated in the description by Stow of the entertainment given by Henry Picard, Mayor of London, in 1357, when the kings of France and Scotland being prisoners in England, and the king of Cyprus on a visit to Edward III., the Mayor 'kept his hall against all comers that were willing to play at dice and hazard. The Lady Margaret, his wife, did keepe her chamber to the same intent.' The Mayor having won fifty marks from the king of Cyprus, returned him the money, saying: 'My lord and king, be not aggrieved; for I covet not your gold but your play.'

REMINISCENCES OF THE UMBEYLA CAMPAIGN.

By W. Forbes Mitchell,
Author of *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny.*

Although it was the most sanguinary of our little border struggles, the Umbeyla Pass campaign of 1863 is very seldom heard of. The recent expedition to Chitral bears a strong resemblance to this expedition for the destruction of the Hindustani colony of Mulkah Sitana, established on the confines of Bunair. The force advanced through much the same country and encountered the very same clans, who then stubbornly contested our march through the Umbeyla Pass.

From my position as commissariat staff-sergeant, I was actually the first European in the field, and the last out of it. On the 1st October 1863, I was directed to proceed from Nowshera to the northern frontier of Yusufzai with a guard of sixty sepoys for the purpose of collecting provisions and fuel for cooking, for both European and native troops at three given points on that frontier, namely, Nawakilla, Permaulie, and Roostum Bazaar. After I had been about ten days out, I was joined by Captain James Brown of the Royal Engineers. The ostensible cause of our advance was to turn out a colony of Hindustani fanatics who had established themselves in a strongly stockaded fort at Mulkah on one of the spurs of the 'Mahabun,' or great mountain. This colony was composed of the remnant of the followers of a certain adventurer named Synd Ahmed, who had collected a large number of Ghazis from the frontier tribes, and from various parts of India, and at one time ruled over the whole of Peshawur and the Yusufzai plains, until he was slain in battle with the troops of Runjit Singh, at the entrance of the Kaghan Valley.

The followers of Syud Ahmed then settled in Sitana, where they remained till 1857, when they were largely reinforced by the fugitive rebels of the regiments which mutinied in Jhelum, Nowshera, Peshawur, and Hoti Murdan. The Hindu mutineers were obliged to become Wahabi Mohammedans, and, of course, were the most fanatical enemies of the British on the north-west frontier. The whole military colony was maintained by donations from bigoted Mussulmans mostly resident in India. In 1858 Sir Sydney Cotton led an expedition against them as far as the Swat Valley; but this expedition only checked them temporarily. Between 1859 and 1863 they made several raids into British territory, and by the latter date they had become so insolent that it was deemed necessary to put them down and destroy their stronghold at Mulkah Sitana. For this purpose a force was assembled at Nawakilla, Yusufzai, on the 12th October 1863, under the command of Sir Neville Chamberlain, the most experienced frontier officer of his time. The force consisted of the 71st Highland Light Infantry from Nowshera, the 101st Bengal Fusiliers from Rawal Pindi, half a battery of Royal Artillery under Captain Griffin, the Hazara and Peshawur Mountain Train, a squadron of Probyn's famous Horse, part of the corps of Guides from Hoti Murdan, four regiments of Punjab Infantry, one regiment of Goorkhas, and the 32d Bengal Infantry; whilst the 51st Europeans from Rawal Pindi formed the reserve. The total force which advanced numbered at first five thousand six hundred men of all arms.

On the 19th October, General Chamberlain broke up his camp at Nawakilla, and marched for Roostum Bazaar, and thence advanced on the Chumbla Valley by the Umbeyla Pass. This position the enemy had failed to occupy, having prepared for the advance by the Darun Pass, directly opposite Nawakilla. The Umbeyla Pass proved to be about nine miles long, and the road most intricate and difficult; but the enemy being taken by surprise, the only fighting was by the skirmishers of our force who crowned the heights on both sides of the gorge. The main body of the expedition reached the head of the pass, and occupied it without opposition in one march, but neither the artillery guns nor commissariat stores could be got up until the afternoon of the second day; and it was four days before the tents and baggage were all up. During these four days the tribes had assembled in thousands.

The General in command of the expedition discovered that his force, although the pick of the European and native troops quartered in the Punjab, was far too weak to beat back the foe opposed to it, and at the same time keep communications open with the rear. To advance would have been madness; so, under the circumstances, all that the General could do was to stand his ground and keep open communications through the pass for supplies from the reserve at Roostum Bazaar. The force accordingly took up a position on the crest of the pass, built up breastworks, and stockaded the guns in the best positions for defending the camp. Strong outposts were constructed on both flanks, and also stockaded as far as possible. But after a few days it was found that the most advanced flank posts were commanded by strong positions higher up the hills, from which the enemy kept up a continuous fire with their long matchlocks, causing heavy loss to the advanced pickets. It therefore became necessary to storm these heights, and occupy them with strong pickets of both European and native troops. The farthest advanced post on the left had been nicknamed the 'Eagle's Nest,' and that on the right the 'Crag' picket. But neither of these posts could be supported in case of an attack, nor relieved from the main body in the camp in less than an hour.

The hill Pathans and Hindustani fanatics soon proved that they were no ordinary foe. The first determined attack they made on the Eagle's Nest picket lasted for four hours, and the picket lost half its number in killed and wounded. In many instances the enemy leaped over the breastworks, sword in hand, selling their lives dearly among the British bayonets, or seized the rifles by the muzzles, trying to wrench them from the soldiers. But the flank posts were not the only places on which assaults were made. Several determined attacks were made on the breastwork in front of the camp, the enemy charging up to the very muzzles of the guns, and cutting down the gunners with their sharp *tulwars*, or stabbing them through with their spears. Lieutenants Fosbery and Battye of the Guides specially distinguished themselves, and their names were in every mouth.

Friday was always a favourite day for an attack. The second Friday after the position was taken up, a most resolute attack was made all along the line, compact bodies of the enemy rushing on with spears, swords, and green standards, shouting 'Allah! Allah! Din! Din!' The sword and spear men were flanked by marksmen who, sheltering themselves behind rocks, fired with well-directed aim, thus covering the advance of the phalanx, till they rushed on to close quarters amongst the British bayonets. My readers must remember that these were still the days of muzzle-loaders, and by a determined rush the enemy could come to close quarters before many rounds could be fired. But there was a clear space of about eighty to a hundred yards in front of the breastwork protecting our camp, which was commanded by two guns; and after four hours' savage fighting the enemy were driven back, leaving three hundred dead and wounded on this exposed part. Our loss was one officer and forty men killed and wounded inside the breastwork. Many of these were cut down by swords, or thrust through with spears. At another point a body of European marksmen had picked off one hundred and eighty of the enemy with a loss of only seven of their own number, whilst many more of the enemy were wounded, although able to retreat. I only give the numbers which were left on the ground when the attack was finally repulsed. Up to this time the British loss was one hundred and thirty of all ranks killed and wounded, including four lieutenants.

About this time news came that the Akhund of Swat, at the head of fifteen thousand men, had joined the enemy. The Akhund was both a spiritual and military leader of great repute amongst the tribes, and an implacable enemy of the British. It was not only reported in the bazaars of the force, but firmly believed by every Mohammedan camp-follower, that his spiritual power was so great that he could turn the British bullets fired against his followers into water, and thereby render them harmless; also that he was miraculously supplied with money for the daily pay of his followers, sufficient for this purpose being found every morning under his private prayer carpet. By this time General Chamberlain had found his force too weak to hold the extended position at the head of the pass, and he arranged to abandon the left, and the pass itself, and to concentrate his force on the right, just under the post called the Crag picket. This necessitated a change of the base of supplies from Roostum Bazaar to Permaulie, a village about sixteen miles more to the south-east. The enemy saw the advantage to the British of holding the post called the Crag picket for the new position, and made a desperate assault. In the attack, many men, both European and native, were killed and wounded. Amongst the latter was Colonel Keyes, one of the most keen-eyed and experienced officers of the frontier force. He was then in command of 'Coke's Rifles,' so distinguished for their service during the siege of Delhi. After Colonel Keyes was wounded, the command of this famous regiment was given to Lieutenant Fosbery, before mentioned, who was awarded the V.C. for his gallantry in holding the Crag picket with only twenty-five men against ten times that number. This young officer forced the enemy to retire, leaving sixty of their number dead on the field, with three of their famous green standards, around which the Goorkhas held a regular war-dance to the tune of their own native pipes, accompanied by the bagpipes of the 71st Highland Light Infantry, with whom the Goorkhas fraternised warmly.

Up to this time the wounded of the enemy left on the field had been carried into the British camp and tended in our hospitals, receiving the same treatment and care as our wounded. But during the severe fighting that took place while the position was being changed, advance pickets were forced in several instances to retire, leaving dead and wounded men behind them, and in every case the wounded were killed, and the bodies of all most shockingly mutilated by the enemy. In one instance, Major Harding, commanding a post, heroically refused to abandon some wounded Goorkhas, and he, with Sergeant J. B. Adams, three men of the 71st, and about a dozen of the 5th Goorkhas, were surrounded and cut off by more than two hundred of the enemy. Although they defended themselves gallantly, darkness set in before they could be reinforced, and the post had to be abandoned till next day. When it was retaken, the bodies of Major Harding, Sergeant Adams, and their comrades, European and Goorkha, were found horribly mutilated—stripped naked, and disembowelled. Their dishonoured remains were found hung up on trees as butchers hang up a slaughtered bullock, with their heads cut off and arranged in front of the bodies. After the mutilated bodies of these men were recovered and carried into camp, an officer of the 71st saw a number of men from his own regiment, the 101st Bengal Fusiliers, with Sikhs and Goorkhas, collected round the tent where the dead were awaiting funeral. He went to see what was the cause of this mixed gathering. He found an old corporal of the 71st standing over the mutilated bodies, with a Bible in his hand, administering a solemn oath to each man, European, Goorkha, and Sikh, as they passed through the tent, that they would give no quarter to the enemy till they could count one hundred dead Pathans for every mutilated corpse. From that date it became an understood thing in the force, both European and native, that no more prisoners were to be taken, and in the fights that ensued many a Pathan and ex-Mutineer paid the penalty, whose life would otherwise have been spared.

To the case of Sergeant J. B. Adams there was a sad sequel. He was a young, powerful man in the prime of life, a thorough soldier, and greatly liked in the regiment, both by officers and men. When the regiment marched from Nowshera he left a young wife behind him, about to become a mother. She was in the woman's ward of the Station Hospital at Nowshera when the news of her husband's death and mutilation reached the depôt left there, and an injudicious friend rushed to her with the news in all its ghastly and horrid details. The poor woman was so overcome that she gave birth to a boy, and immediately died. This child was adopted by the 71st, and brought up as the child of the regiment. This incident has been fittingly seized by William Brodie, the Scottish sculptor who designed the monument erected in Glasgow Cathedral to the memory of the officers and men of the 71st Highland Light Infantry who fell in the Yusufzai campaign of 1863.

By the 18th of November the General had changed his military position, his base of operations, and line of communications, but at a heavy cost. Ensign Murray of the 71st, Lieutenant Dougall of the 79th, serving as a volunteer with the 71st, and thirty-five men were killed, and thirty-seven wounded. Amongst the wounded were Lieutenants Oliphant of the 5th Goorkhas, and W. Battye of the Guides, a brother of Quentin Battye, who fell at Delhi with a Latin quotation in his mouth, *Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori.* Another brother of the same family, I may mention, fell at Fattehabad during the last Afghan war. A fourth brother, Lieutenant-colonel F. D. Battye, of the Guides, was killed on the Panjkora River, in the Chitral campaign of 1895. During the present generation the family of Battye have nobly upheld the honour and added to the glory of our country. But to match these heavy losses on our side, the enemy had also suffered severely.

Shortly after the arrival of reinforcements, the second great attack was made on the Crag picket by a body of about three thousand men. On the night of the assault, the crag was garrisoned by one hundred and sixty men commanded by Colonel Brownlow, whose experience of hill warfare led him to expect an attack, from the preparations he had seen going on in the enemy's camp; he was therefore prepared and on the alert. As there was no moon during the early part of the night, the enemy managed to advance unseen till they were within eighty yards of the post, when they were espied and met by a well-directed volley. Raising their war-cry of 'Allah! Allah!' the enemy dashed at the breastwork, and in spite of the bayonets of the defenders, breached the wall in many places. By this time, however, two mountain guns, which had been placed in position before dark two hundred and fifty yards in rear of the post, loaded with shell, fired over the heads of our men, and the shells bursting amongst the crowded ranks of the tribesmen advancing to the attack, caused terrible slaughter among them. Although repulsed again and again during the night, the hillmen continually returned to the assault and attempted to carry the post by storm. But Colonel Brownlow and his brave men were never caught napping, and every attack was repulsed. Just before daybreak a thick fog enveloped the hills, and the enemy disappeared, and when morning broke they were believed to have retired. As it turned out, however, they were concealed within a few yards of the breastwork. Colonel Brownlow and his men had been on duty for forty-eight hours, and were completely worn out with fighting and watching, and as soon as daylight came a force was sent from the camp to relieve them. During the relief there was not one of the enemy to be seen, and Colonel Brownlow and his men retired, and shortly afterwards the fog again thickened.

All this time the enemy were lying concealed by the rocks, wrapped in the fog. Suddenly, as the new picket were making themselves comfortable, they were overwhelmed by more than a thousand men. The officer in command was killed, and the men, completely taken by surprise, were borne down by numbers. The post was taken, and the greater part of the garrison were slain; but the fog opportunely lifted, and the fire of the two mountain guns stopped the pursuit of the enemy into the camp after the fugitives of the picket. The European portion of the defeated garrison belonged to the 101st, and Colonel Salisbury at the head of that gallant regiment retook the post at the point of the bayonet, but with heavy loss, the hillmen defending every rock as the redcoats advanced. In the rush of the 101st up the hill, the brave and dashing colonel was knocked down and stunned by a big stone, hurled from above. This caused a moment's halt, and some confusion; but when the men ran to lift him he sprang to his feet without assistance, wiping the blood from his face and shouting: 'Come on, men, I'm all right; my skull may be cracked, but my brains are still in it.' The word passed to the rear that the Colonel was all right, and the men gave a shout and dashed on, and the Crag picket was retaken.

During the time occupied in changing the position, the enemy overpowered one of the advanced posts held by Major Ross and one hundred and forty men of the 14th Ferozepore Sikhs. Two companies of the 71st and one of the 101st were sent to reinforce him, but the enemy also received powerful reinforcements, and during the murderous struggle that took place for the recapture of the breastwork, four European officers were killed.

The third great attempt was made on the 20th of November. The enemy, consisting of the tribesmen from Bajaur, Bunair, and Swat, mustered in great strength and attacked the Crag picket, which was then held by one hundred men of the 101st and one hundred of the 20th Native Infantry. The assault lasted from daybreak till noon, when the enemy, receiving reinforcements, overpowered the garrison, and the post fell for the third time, with the loss of two officers and a large number of men killed. It was owing solely to the determined bravery of Major Delafosse of the 101st, and Major Rogers of the 20th Punjab Infantry, that a single man escaped. These two officers performed prodigies of valour. They rallied the retreating men, and although overpowered, prevented the enemy from rushing the camp till the alarm was given. The picket of two hundred men was overwhelmed by three thousand tribesmen. Many of the defenders were seized and hurled over the rocks and dashed to pieces below, the hillmen planting their standards all along the ridge.

The 71st had just returned to camp from twenty-four hours' duty at another point, and were getting their dinner, when General Sir Neville Chamberlain himself called on them to fall in. The men left their dinner with the utmost alacrity and fell in, with the pipers playing the gathering as gaily as for an ordinary parade. The two mountain guns shelled the heights and covered the advance. Colonel William Hope, addressing the men, said: 'Men of the 71st, you must follow me and retake the Crag picket.' And as the men were tightening their belts and examining the springs of their bayonets, one could hear the words passing along the rank: 'It's to be hot work, boys, but we must stand by old Pinkie,' the name by which the Colonel was known. In those days the staff-sergeants of regiments were not supplied with revolvers, and I lent my revolver to Sergeant-major John Blackwood, of the 71st, 'Brave Jock Blackwood' the men called him. I had also a famous Damascus tulwar that I had preserved from the plunder of the Begum's kothee of Lucknow, which I also lent to Blackwood for the assault on the Crag picket. I never saw either revolver or sword again, so the country owes me a Dean and Adam's revolver for which I had paid a hundred rupees, and a Damascus blade for which I had refused one thousand; but both did good service in the hands of Blackwood on the 20th November 1863, and saved the lives of Colonel William Hope and General Sir Neville Chamberlain.

In the excitement of the moment, General Chamberlain forgot his position as General commanding, and became once more the dashing *sabreur* who, in years gone by, both in Afghanistan and on the plains of the Punjab, had led many a gallant charge. Placing himself alongside of Colonel Hope, he called out: '71st Highland Light Infantry, I'm proud to have you under my command to-day, and I will go with your colonel.' The men gave a cheer and advanced up the hill without a halt or check. Sir Neville Chamberlain, Colonel Hope, and Sergeant-major Blackwood, in front of all,, entered the picket together. Blackwood was a powerful, active man, and an expert swordsman. He shot down five men with the revolver, and cut down as many more with the sharp tulwar, when his left arm was smashed by a bullet through the elbow-joint. Colonel Hope had also an arm broken, and General Chamberlain was shot through the thigh; but as they were closely followed by the other officers and men of the 71st, the lives of all three were saved, and, after a severe contest, the Goorkhas and Sikhs swarming up in support, the enemy were driven from the picket, and in turn many of them were also dashed over the steep rock on the right of the position, and the 71st and Goorkhas once more held the Crag picket.

This was the last great attack which the enemy made. They must have learned that large reinforcements of both European and native troops were hastening to the front.

ST MONANS, FIFE.

There it rests, with its back to the brae,
The jumbled, zigzag, gray old town;
Roofs red and brown—roofs purple and gray,
Blue-dim through reek from the chimneys blown;
Roofs slanting, triform, jutting, square,
With skylights yawning wide for air,
And gables—gables everywhere!

Low in the lap of the land it lies,
On the knees of the shore serene and gray;
The earth's green arms about it thrown,
Its feet on the rocks where the sea-mew flies,
And ever with mournful monotone,
Ebbing and flowing the sea-tides sway—
Ebbing and flowing for ever and aye.

Dark on the sunset's ruddy gold,
The old church-tower on the western height;
The sturdy church, six centuries old,
On the edge of the wave, with the town in sight;
Where pray the living, where find repose
The generations whom no man knows.

Boats in the harbour—nets on the brae,
Sunbrowned fishers upon the pier;
Women light-ankled, deft-handed, gay,
Ready to answer with joke or jeer;
Children who make the old village ring
With the games they play, the songs they sing.

Oh, here Life steps to a heartsome strain;
Each for the love of them works for his own;
And not for any man's single gain,
For a master's profit to sweat and groan:
And blithely the sails with a stout 'yo-ho!'
To the mast-head rise as they outward go.

Come luck, come lack, one deal to each:
Nor fear nor favour the fisher knows,
As he sails away from the happy beach,
When the fish are rife and a fair wind blows;
And what though a grave in the sea his lot?
Holds it one hollow where God is not?

Ah! still do I dream of that gray old shore,
Its murmur of waves, its sheltering calm;
The hearty speech and the open door,
And the welcome word that fell like balm—
Till over my soul in a flood-tide free,
My long-lost faith flowed back to me;
Yea, the heart of my youth I found in thee,
Oh gray St Monans, beside the sea.

J. K. Lawson.

⁂ TO CONTRIBUTORS.

1*st*. All communications should be addressed to the 'Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.'

2*d*. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.

3*d*. To secure their safe return if ineligible, All Manuscripts, whether accompanied by a letter of advice or otherwise, *should have the writer's Name and Address written upon them* in full.

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A CENTURY OF BURNS BIOGRAPHY.

By William Wallace.

On the 21st of July 1896 will be completed that hundred years from the death of Robert Burns which, according to a generally credited, if not absolutely verified tradition, he told his Jean would be required to do justice to his memory. In the March number of the *Monthly Magazine and British Register* for 1797, there appeared the first instalment of the first biography of the poet—the modest beginning of the most extraordinary literature of the 'Memoirs' order which the world has seen, or is likely to see. It was signed 'H,' and came from the pen of Robert Heron, an unfortunate—and according to Allan Cunningham—dissipated 'stickit minister' and hack of letters, who died in 1807, and at the age of forty-three, in the Fever Hospital of St Pancras, to which he had removed from a debtor's cell in Newgate. Heron's biography was anticipated, however, in the same magazine by anonymous 'stanzas' (in reality a poem of great length) to the memory of Robert Burns. These stanzas appeared in the 'original poetry' department of the periodical in January (that January which, had the poet-exciseman lived, would have witnessed his promotion to a supervisorship), in the company, oddly enough, of verses by Charles Lamb, who writes to 'Sara and S. T. C. at Bristol,' complaining that he cannot snatch 'a fleeting holiday, a little week,' to see them, and to

> Muse in tears on that mysterious youth,
> Cruelly slighted, who, in evil hour,
> Shap'd his advent'rous course to London walls.

There is, indeed, something almost pathetically prophetic in the character both of the poetical and of the prose memorials to the genius of Burns which appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* ninety-nine years ago. Upon the merits of no man have poets been more heartily united and biographers more fatally, if not fiercely, disunited. The anonymous writer of January 1797 closes his stanzas thus:

> High above thy reptile foes
> Thy tow'ring soul unconquer'd rose—
> Love and the Muse their charms disclose—
> The hags retire;
> And thy expanded bosom glows
> With heav'nly fire.
> Go, Builder of a deathless name!
> Thy Country's glory, and her shame!
> Go, and th' immortal guerdon claim,
> To Genius due;
> Whilst rolling centuries thy fame
> Shall still renew!

Here already we have the spirit, if not the genius, of Wordsworth's noble lines, of the scarcely less eloquent Ode of Mr William Watson, one of the most eminent of living poets, and the silent tears which, according to Edward FitzGerald, were wrung from the late Lord Tennyson by the sudden realisation of the glory of Doonside, and the tragedy of Dumfries. On the other hand, Heron began his biography with a grotesque inaccuracy, and closed it with the first crude statement of the gravest of all the charges that have been made against the character of Burns. He claimed for the poet that he was the product and triumph of the Scottish parochial school system. This was altogether a blunder. If Burns was a triumph of anything except natural genius, he was a triumph of private tuition. Heron further brought his biography to a termination with this extraordinary statement: 'Even in the last feebleness, and amid the last agonies of expiring life, yielding readily to any temptation that offered the semblance of intemperate enjoyment, he died at Dumfries, in the summer of the year 1796, while he was yet three or four years under the age of forty.' It is hardly too much to say that the biographers of Burns, who have followed in the wake of Heron, have devoted more attention to ascertaining how much—or how little—truth there is in this damning declaration, than to the elucidation of any other disputed incident in the life of the poet.

In this same year, 1797, Heron reprinted his articles in the *Monthly Magazine*, with additions, as a biography of Robert Burns, and under his signature. But immediately after the poet's death, arrangements were made for the publication of an authoritative Memoir. This work was entrusted to Dr James Currie, a Liverpool physician, a great admirer of Burns, and a connection of Mrs Dunlop. Currie had many advantages, including access to original manuscripts of poems and letters, which have been enjoyed by no subsequent biographer. Relatives of Burns, like his brother Gilbert, and surviving friends, like Syme of Ryedale, were understood to have given him all the help in their power. When Currie's Life appeared in 1800, it met with an instantaneous success. Few biographies have passed through so many editions as this has done; still fewer have been subjected to such merciless criticism. The weaknesses of Currie's work are, indeed, only too apparent. He is deplorably inaccurate in matters of detail. He took unwarrantable liberties with Burns's letters. He has been proved to have deliberately misdated several of those which, in his last years, the poet addressed to Mrs Dunlop. He listened far too readily to reports bearing unfavourably on the life of a man whom he had never seen. It has been said that Currie was supported by the authority of Burns's physician, Dr Maxwell. This view has, however, been discredited, to say the least, by the fact that while Currie expressly declares that Burns went to the Brow Well in the last months of his life in opposition to the views of his medical attendant, letters published within a comparatively recent period prove that the poet took this step in accordance with the advice of that attendant! But of Dr Currie's good intentions there can be no doubt whatever, and his Life is still, within certain limits, authoritative.

It was followed in 1808 by Cromek's *Reliques*, which, although mainly notable as giving poems by Burns which up to that period had not seen the light, was valuable also for certain biographical passages. One of these—that dealing with the story of Highland Mary—has become part and parcel of imperishable poetical romance. Three years later, Professor Josiah Walker, who knew Burns personally, published a biography by way of preface to Morison's edition of the poems. It contained reminiscences which are still of some interest and even biographical value, in spite of at least one serious mistake in dates which they contained, and of the scarification to which they and their author were subjected at the hands of Professor John Wilson. A reaction now set in against the view of Burns's latest years—that he became intemperate and dissolute—first given by Heron, and countenanced to a considerable extent by Currie. It became known that men like Findlater, his official superior, and his neighbour, Gray the teacher, indignantly denied these charges, and declared that their friend, although he lived a freely social life, never fell into sottishness. The first-fruits of this reaction was the sympathetic biography which the celebrated ecclesiastic, humourist, and convivialist, the Rev. Hamilton Paul, published along with an edition of the Poems and Songs in 1819. This work in turn led up to a much more important work, conceived in a similar spirit. John Gibson Lockhart's Life, published in 1828, still holds its own as one of the standard biographies of Burns. As all the world knows, it was the work of Lockhart which called forth the celebrated Essay of Carlyle, which is at once one of the great masterpieces of Burns criticism, and the high-water mark of its author's earlier and, as many folk still think, better style.

The publication of Lockhart's Life marks a stage—as it closed a generation—of Burns Biography. Lives and editions now poured forth on both sides of the Border with a rapidity almost as extraordinary as the growth of Burns Clubs, and testifying, like that unique phenomenon, to the permanent fascination of the poet's life and personality. They are far too numerous to mention; but the first Aldine edition, published in three volumes in 1839 along with a memoir by Sir Harris Nicolas, merits a word of attention, both for the fresh poems of Burns which were published in it, and also as being the first important work on Burns that was published in England. And it became a fashion with Scottish poets to edit the works of their acknowledged pioneer and master. In 1834 'honest'—but by no means invariably accurate—Allan Cunningham published an edition of Burns in eight volumes, along with a Life which derives some weight from the fact that its author was a Dumfriesshire man, and claimed special acquaintance with the last seven years of the poet's life. James Hogg and William Motherwell published an edition of Burns's works in 1836; the fifth volume of this edition is a biography written by James Hogg. Among the other Scottish poets who have tried their hands at editing Burns's works, or writing his life, are Alexander Smith, who prepared the well-known Globe edition of the Life and Works of Burns (1868); Principal Shairp of St Andrews, whose monograph on the poet in the 'English Men of Letters' series (1879) raised a controversy which has not yet been forgotten, and is notable as having led Robert Louis Stevenson to write 'Some Aspects of Robert Burns,' which takes rank with Wilson's *éloge* in the *Land of Burns*, and Carlyle's essay, among the most remarkable criticisms of the poet's character and work; the Rev. George Gilfillan, whose *National*

Burns appeared in 1878-79; Professor Nichol, who in 1882 contributed a biographical and critical essay on Burns to William Scott Douglas's six-volume edition of the Poems and Letters (published by Mr Paterson of Edinburgh), and Mr Andrew Lang, who contributed an Introduction to *Selected Poems of Robert Burns* (1891, Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.).

Meanwhile, the necessity for investigating every incident in Burns's life separately and much more thoroughly than had been done by Currie and Lockhart, had become obvious, and had been emphasised by the publication of the celebrated Clarinda correspondence, first irregularly in 1802, and in a more complete form in 1843. This necessity was seen by no man more than by Robert Chambers, who, always an enthusiastic and painstaking student of Burns, had edited (1838) one of the numerous editions of Currie, and in 1840 had, in conjunction with Professor Wilson, produced *The Land of Burns*, which is still the standard work on Burns topography. Dr Chambers's investigations further led him to the conclusion that of no poet can it be said so absolutely as of Burns that his works form part of his life. The great majority both of his poems and of his letters reflect his moods—his despair, the anxiety and remorse due to his 'thoughtless follies;' his all-embracing love of nature and humanity, the ecstasies on the wings of which he soared above the circumstances of his life. Dr Chambers perceived that to separate the biography of the poet from the poems and letters was to effect an unnatural divorce, as they were portions of one astonishing if not stupendous whole. This connection was strengthened by the researches of another very painstaking student of Burns, William Scott Douglas, which culminated in the famous paper which he read before the Society of Scottish Antiquaries in January 1850, and which rendered it almost certain that Burns's betrothal to Highland Mary was an episode in that other attachment which ended in Jean Armour becoming his wife. Dr Chambers followed up this paper by independent discoveries in Greenock, which proved, among other things, that the Mary Campbell whom all but universally accepted belief has identified with the Highland Lassie of Burns's verse and prose, must, if the story of her relatives can be accepted at all, have been buried in the West Kirkyard of that town immediately after the acquisition of a 'lair' there by her brother-in-law on October 12, 1786. The labours of Dr Chambers, who had been placed in possession of all the information at the disposal of Burns's surviving relatives, and of his youngest sister, Mrs Begg, were crowned especially by the publication in 1851-52 of his Life of Burns in four volumes. This work was at once recognised by the public as the authoritative biography of Burns, representing his life as an organic whole, in which letters, poems, and incidents form a 'harmony not understood'—that indeed could not have been understood—by previous editors and biographers.

Nearly half a century has elapsed since Dr Chambers's great work was published. Since then, innumerable editions of Burns's works, and not a few biographies, have been published in this country, in America, and even on the Continent, where the Burns cult is spreading with marvellous rapidity. Among the most remarkable of these Lives are the highly original 'spiritual' biography of the Rev. Dr Hately Waddell, published in 1869, and the Life in two volumes given to the world in 1893 by M. Auguste Angellier, a professor in Lille. M. Angellier's book is a remarkable performance in many ways—well informed, scholarly, and full of enthusiasm. To find a parallel to Burns, he goes not to 'the too didactic Hesiod, nor the precise Theocritus,' but to 'the marvellous verses of Aristophanes.' There 'we find the countryman speaking for himself, loving the earth unphilosophically, simply for the benefit he derives from it, and the labour it asks of him.' But M. Angellier's work is mainly notable for his strenuous, and on the whole wonderfully successful effort to translate Burns into French.

Not only is Burns literature increasing by leaps and bounds, but it is being specialised. For example, the books more or less of a biographical nature which have been written on Highland Mary almost vie in number and in passion with those which have been evoked by the beauty and tragic story of her namesake the Queen of Scots. Nor is it at all an exaggeration to say that the controversial literature which has arisen out of the question whether Burns, when he lived in Edinburgh, was formally installed as Laureate of the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge of Freemasons, is equal in dimensions to the biographies of Currie and Lockhart combined. The process of Burns specialisation has been greatly encouraged by the establishment of Burns Clubs all over the world. A number of these have formed themselves into a Federation with an organ, the *Burns Chronicle*, which, published annually, devotes itself largely to the elucidation of the poet's biography. Some missing links in the chain of that biography, in the form both of poems and letters, have been found in the course of the last forty-three years. Most of these—including some which have never yet seen the light—were recovered by Dr Chambers, who continued to the end of his life an indefatigable collector of all information bearing on his favourite subject. Certain aspects of Burns's life also merit further exploration. The full story of his stay in Irvine has to be related. The whole truth has not been told of the circumstances under which he contemplated exile to Jamaica. The last word has not been said on Highland Mary. Above all things, fresh investigations into the life of Burns in Dumfries tend happily to give him a higher claim, not to the love and admiration—for a higher claim to these he cannot have—but to the respect, of his fellow-countrymen.

The researches of the last forty-three years have left unshaken the vast majority of the statements of fact which Dr Chambers embodied in his biography. But they have further demonstrated the wisdom of the general plan which he adopted. The national feeling of Scotland for Burns has rendered the periodical rectification, elucidation, and consolidation of his biography a sacred duty; and it is in the performance of this duty that the publishers of Dr Chambers's Life will issue during the next year a revised edition of that work, containing the later discoveries of its author and of other Burns students who have followed in his footsteps.

Is there to be any finality in regard to Burns? Rather, is not such finality more than a century old? 'In this prodigy Will has dung Fate,' wrote, in 1787, Sir Gilbert Elliot, who became the first Earl of Minto, and who belonged to the class of men of action—in all conditions of life—for whom more especially Burns wrote. This was among the first words of Burns criticism. It will be the last.

'SEVEN-UP' BLAINE'S CONVERSION.

CHAPTER II.—THE END OF THE FEUD.

FORTYFOOT was a kind of reproduction of New Denver on a somewhat smaller scale—less in the number of its inhabitants, less rich in mineral wealth, and, consequently, a little less wicked, but not much. Situated nearly halfway between the more important mining-camp and Quartz Rock, the nearest point of railroad communication with the outer world, and likewise at the junction of two turnpikes, the congested traffic of two mining settlements passed through it, and to this fact 'Hennesey's Hotel,' a rather commodious two-storeyed frame-building, owed its existence.

It was towards the close of the afternoon when Jim, the stage-driver, pulled up his reeking team in front of Hennesey's, and 'Seven-up' Blaine, having climbed down from his seat, stretched himself, and made his way into the bar. During the five-and-twenty-mile journey from New Denver, he had endeavoured to extract further information from Jim concerning young Hingston; but the driver could not, or would not, gratify his curiosity beyond stating that such a person had boarded the coach at Quartz Rock, that he had been set down at Fortyfoot, and, what was of infinitely greater importance, had stood him (Jim) a dollar over and above the usual fare. Jim was no fool, combining, as he did, in his character the estimable virtues of minding his own business and keeping a watchful eye on the main chance.

'Got a galoot of the name of Hingston hanging out in these yer diggin's o' yourn, Hennesey?' Blaine inquired, as he caught the eye of the proprietor, to whom he was well known.

'Hingston—Hingston? Oh, he came in by last night's stage from Quartz Rock. Private room up-stairs, number six, second door on the right. Shall I send for him down, Blaine?'

'No, you don't do no sech thing, Hennesey. You just put up your hand, and I'll chip in on him permiscus-like, for I've a leetle private business to settle with him. Gimme a cocktail fust.'

Blaine did not order the beverage for the purpose of inspiring himself with Dutch courage; he had no need for that. The fact is that, though still the toughest customer in north-west Arizona, he was not quite the man he had once been. A few years of abstinence from physical labour in the mines had tended to the development in him of a slight increase of adipose tissue at the expense of muscular fibre, and he felt that, after the severe jolting he had undergone on the stage, a 'drap o' suthin' would be beneficial, not to stimulate his valour, but to pull him together and steady him for the coming interview, in which he was exceedingly anxious to do justice to his own exceptional abilities, as well as to the memories of the unfortunate 'old man Blaine' and the no less valiant 'Lish Jacobson. He swallowed the liquor, criticised the quality of it in no measured terms, and solemnly mounted the stairs with the echo of his mother's dying words ringing in his ears, while Hennesey watched him from below, wondering what on earth could be the nature of his mission.

At the second door on the right he paused for a moment to make sure that his six-shooter was in his hip-pocket and his knife in his boot. Then he knocked, and in response to a pleasant, cheery voice which bade him 'Come in,' he opened the door and took a few steps into the room. He stopped abruptly as he caught a full sight of the occupant of the apartment, who eyed him curiously from his seat behind the table, where he had evidently been writing when interrupted.

'Whom have I the honour of addressing?' inquired the young man, rising from his chair to the full height of his six-feet odd inches.

Certainly he wore a tailed coat and a white shirt, and certainly he was a long, lean individual, who bore the stamp of a university education on his pale, intellectual face as well as in his polished, gentlemanly ease of manner. So far his appearance tallied with Phil's description; but that scamp had, inadvertently or otherwise, omitted to mention that his garments were sable of hue and sober of cut, and likewise that he wore a stand-up, clerical collar and a white cambric necktie—the unmistakable outward signs and symbols of the ministry.

As Blaine took in these particulars, a sudden change came over his countenance. His jaw dropped, and his eyes dilated in blank, helpless dismay.

'*A gospel sharp, by thunder!*' he ejaculated, unconsciously aloud, while the minister looked on at his confusion with undisguised amusement.

'I ax yer parding fur intruding, mister,' he blurted out apologetically, as he backed uneasily towards the door to make his exit. 'I reckon I've yanked my ball into the wrong alley this time. 'Pears to have been a mistake somewhar. Guess I'd better prospect the next claim farther on. It ain't a parson I wanter roust out, but a lop-eared thief of the name of Hingston ez Hennesey 'lowed I should find in number six, second door on the right. Howsomever, ez *you* ain't the greaser I'm after, Hennesey must hev somehow got tangled among the numbers, an' I'll jest prospect round till I strike the right drift.'

With this, 'Seven-up' Blaine, having almost reached the door, was preparing to make a bolt of it, when the minister interposed.

'Stay!' he exclaimed, attempting in vain to assume an appearance of becoming gravity. 'Perhaps, after all, Mr Hennesey may not be guilty of having made the mistake you suspect him of. My name is Hingston—Everard Hingston, of New York; though to what circumstances I am indebted for the honour of this visit I am as yet totally at a loss to understand.'

'Great Scott! You a Hingston?' gasped Blaine, beginning vaguely to comprehend at least a part of the situation.

'My name is Hingston—Everard Hingston, as I previously observed.'

'Abner Hingston's whelp?'

'Abner Hingston was my father, which is, I presume, what you mean.'

'An' a gospel sharp?'

'I am proud to own myself a minister of the gospel.'

'Wal, gol-durn my hide!' And in a state of utterly helpless, dazed perplexity, Blaine dropped into the nearest chair and commenced to mop his face with his crimson bandana.

He was not at bottom a bad-hearted man; not naturally vicious. His eccentricities and failings were not the eccentricities and failings of an individual so much as of a class—the class of roughs of the very roughest type (which now, thank Heaven, is rapidly dying out), among whom his early years had been spent; and the fact that he held human life, under certain circumstances, so cheap, was attributable to the same unwholesome surroundings. Like many of his stamp, though not actually atheistic, he was wholly irreligious, and it was due entirely to outside influence that his daughter Cynthia had not grown up in complete ignorance of even the rudimentary elements of Christian faith. Yet, while utterly apathetic himself to all religious teaching, when brought into immediate contact with a minister or clergyman, he was conscious of a sneaking, vague conviction that, by some unknown code, there was a certain indefinable respect due to the cloth, which it would be a distinct breach of etiquette to overlook. As Blaine had himself professed, there was no man 'high-toneder' (according to his lights) in the mines, and how to conscientiously reconcile his notion of the conventionalities with his murderous design, or, in other words, how to kill young Hingston without offering an indignity to the profession he represented, was the difficult problem he now laboured to solve. The minister stood by in increasing wonderment as Blaine silently wrestled with the mighty question, the perspiration oozing freely from his mahogany face in the agony of indecision. By degrees he seemed to get a better grasp of the difficulties in his way, and a line of action, which he considered would satisfactorily meet the exigencies of the case, presented itself to him.

'Say, pard,' he began in an explanatory tone, 'you rather got the bulge on me at fust. D'yer see, I reckoned to find a or'nery cuss of a greaser, an' the sight o' them doxology togs, bein' sprung so sudden on yours truly, so to speak, sorter stumped me. Ef you hed been the galoot I'd calkerlated on, I should jest hev waltzed in; but I 'low to know my manners too durned well not to do the c'reck thing, an' seein' ez how you air a gospel sharp, I offers you the fust call.'

'I fear you must think me dreadfully dense, but I must confess that I don't in the least comprehend what you are driving at.'

'You don't tumble, eh?—you don't quite ketch on? Wal, then, in this-yer business I'm on, I offers you the ch'ice of weppings—derringers or bowies? Give it a name, pard, an' I'm on it!'

Hingston grasped so much of his visitor's meaning as to convince himself that what had up to now struck him as a bit of most diverting comedy was in reality but the prelude to an intended tragedy, and the uncomfortable feeling that the man he had to do with was a dangerous lunatic took possession of him.

'My good friend,' he replied in a conciliatory voice, 'you are evidently labouring under a misapprehension. I have no quarrel with you, neither have I any desire to seek one. Being a minister of religion, I am essentially a man of peace, unaccustomed to the use of either revolvers or knives, and possessing neither.'

'Hennesey'll accommodate you at the bar.'

'But I have no wish to be accommodated in that way. Why you should be anxious, as you seem to be, to engage me in a duel, I am at a loss to understand. Having only arrived in Fortyfoot so late as yesterday, and never, so far as my memory serves me, having met you before, I fail to see what I can possibly have done to offend you. If, however, I have in any way unconsciously given you cause to bear me ill-will, I offer you my heartiest apologies.'

'Cheese it, pard!' exclaimed Blaine impatiently. 'You can't bluff me with no sech palaver ez thet ef you chin it out till the cows come home. Why, a blue jay could see thet blind! You don't try to play it off on me thet you air the blamedest, greenest, chuckleheadedest innercent ez ever liquidated cat-lap, 'cos no Hingston ez I ever heearn tell on ever was. No, you don't ketch me on with *thet* lead—no indeedy! Seein' ez how you air a parson, an' I've got to cramp down suthin' awful in consekens—which it gravels me like tarnation to hev to do the perlite to a Hingston—let's hev the thing on the squar'. Wot you take this-yer corner of Arizona in yer trail fur when it don't lead to nowhar in particler?'

'That is a private matter which I should certainly decline to discuss with a stranger.'

'Which this-yer private matter is important family business?'

The minister gave a little start of surprise, and nodded affirmatively.

'Which this-yer family business is not altogether onconnected with a bully ole buzzard of the name of Blaine—Blaine of New Denver?'

At this juncture, Hingston was only one whit less astonished than his visitor had been a little while previously.

'I admit that you may be correct in your surmise,' he confessed. 'Perhaps my business is with Mr Blaine; though how you can possibly have come by your knowledge I am unable to think—unless,' he added thoughtfully, more to himself than to his hearer—'unless, indeed, the man Phil, who sat next me on the stage, has violated his promise?'

''Scuse me; wot Phil promised ain't no funeral o' mine,' returned Blaine blandly, enjoying the other's evident discomfiture. 'You 'low ez you air on the trail o' this-yer Blaine, an' I calkerlate you air hangin' round these-yer parts layin' fur to get the drop on him?'

'I—er—that is, I acknowledge that I—er—had an idea that my appearance would come as a surprise to him,' the minister stammered confusedly. 'However,' collecting himself, 'that can be no concern of yours. You have certainly surprised me into a sort of general admission, but I must decline to discuss the matter further with a stranger. As I said before, my business is with Mr Blaine, and with him alone.'

'I'm Blaine.'

'*What!* Blaine of New Denver?'

'Blaine of New Denver—Ed'ard Wilkerson Blaine.'

Young Hingston's face turned a shade paler, and he pressed his hand helplessly to his forehead as he recoiled a few steps, almost paralysed by the suddenness of the shock, for the merest suspicion of the real identity of the intruder had never once crossed his mind. The two men stood and stared at each other in silence.

'This is unfortunate—most unfortunate!' gasped the minister in the direst perplexity. 'The circumstances of this encounter are so very different—so *disastrously* different to what I had fondly permitted myself to anticipate would be those of our first meeting.'

'I calkerlate thet is so. Yer best keerd's trumped this time,' put in the other sarcastically.

'Edward Wilkinson Blaine!' Hingston repeated mechanically. 'You—you're quite sure that you—er—are not mistaken?'

'Wal, I reckon I orter know my own name.'

'Edward—Wilkinson—Blaine! Then—*then you are Cynthia's father!*'

'You 'pear to be slingin' my darter's name about purty free,' observed 'Seven-up,' rising angrily from his seat.

'Mr Blaine,' said the minister earnestly, but not without a great effort, 'you and I must understand each other, the sooner the better. I had expected to make your acquaintance to-morrow. Fate has ordained that we should meet to-day, and I regret, more bitterly than I can tell, that the meeting promises to end unhappily for the cherished hopes I had formed. I was guilty of an error in judgment in allowing myself to be prevailed upon to adopt the course of action I have done.'

'I *hev* knowed men die in their boots for less mistakes than thet,' remarked Blaine grimly.

'Allowing that it was a mistake, let us get to the root of the matter. Personally—that is, apart from this affair—I think there is nothing to justify you in forming so unfavourable an opinion of me?'

'Wal, it ain't likely I should cotton to Pete Hingston's nevvy—Pete Hingston wot blew daylight through ole man Blaine an' likewise laid out 'Lish Jacobson, my step-dad. It ain't likely—skursely!'

The young minister turned a ghastly hue. He reeled like a drunken man, clutching the table for support. The sweat of a great anguish studded his brow.

'This is doubly unfortunate!' he cried sadly, as soon as he could command himself. 'Believe me, I had no idea that you had any interest in this unhappy feud. I have heard my father mention the deplorable circumstances of the quarrel, but the possibility of the Blaines of New Denver being even connected with the Blaines of Snapper's Flat was far too remote to have suggested itself to me.'

'Stow that! Wot you yank my darter Cynthy's name inter this-yer palaver fur?'

'Mr Blaine,' replied the minister bravely, but with a beating heart, 'I won't beat about the bush. I love your daughter sincerely—truly, with that entire, overwhelming devotion a man can offer but to one woman in his lifetime. When you sent Cynthia to Boston two years ago to finish her education and to gain an insight into the fashionable world befitting her position, you must have realised that with her wealth of charms she would speedily have a flock of suitors at her feet. You cannot have been blind to the fact, too, that she was at an age when it was more than probable she might seriously listen to the promptings of her heart in accepting or refusing the homage of her admirers. Cynthia is twenty-one; no longer a fickle, fanciful girl, she is a woman—a beautiful, noble creature, but still a woman, with a woman's nature and a woman's heart. How much or how little you may have heard I do not know. I met her three months ago at the house of the lady who undertook to chaperon her—Mrs Selborne—while I was staying with friends in Boston. The acquaintance quickly ripened, though it was impossible for my love for her to do so, for my heart was wholly, unconditionally hers from the first hour we met. At first I hardly dared to hope that she would ever reciprocate my passion, but love knows no obstacles, and I determined, come what might, that I would win her for my wife. I'——

'Wot! my Cynthy marry a skulkin' tramp of a Hingston, an' help run a doxology-mill? No, by thunder! I'll see her hitched up to Fowler's nigger bar-tender fust!' roared Blaine in a paroxysm of fury, and in the white-heat of his passion he completely forgot those nice points in his code of etiquette which forbade him shooting a minister 'on sight.' His eyes blazed with rage, and his left hand dived under his coat-tail. In a trice the revolver was whipped out and levelled at the young man's head. Blaine's finger tightened on the trigger.

The derringer spoke, short and sharp. The missile sang past the minister's ear, dangerously near, as he instinctively ducked, and found its billet in the lintel of the door leading into the adjoining room.

'Seven-up' Blaine did not empty the second chamber of his weapon on that occasion. Other matters occupied his attention. So far as he could make out in the confusion that followed, some impetuous, irresistible force seemed to have suddenly become unchained in that modest apartment. It was not exactly a thunderbolt, nor yet an earthquake; neither was it a waterspout, nor even a cyclone. In its action and violence it appeared to his muddled faculties to partake of the nature of all four rolled into one. Before the puff of smoke had cleared away, the pistol was jerked out of his grasp and flung out of the window. A pair of long, muscular arms gripped him round the waist with the strength of steel, and hurled him backwards to the floor. Long before he had sufficiently recovered from his astonishment to consider the advisability, or otherwise, of attempting to rise, the minister, with the strength of three men, caught him by the scruff of the neck, jerked him on to his feet, and with a sledge-hammer blow from his iron fist, delivered with admirable precision full between the eyes, knocked him down again.

The Rev. Everard Hingston was stooping over his fallen foe, savagely glorying in that prowess which in feats of strength had placed him far ahead of the other Yale athletes of his year, when, uninvited and unsought, there flashed upon him a text from Ecclesiastes—'Anger resteth in the bosom of fools!' His hand was stayed in the very act of clutching the unfortunate Blaine's collar; the fierce light faded from his clear gray eyes; the brute gave way to the man, and the minister was himself again. His arms fell listlessly to his sides, and a pained look came over him. In the first moments of his victory he drank deep of the waters of Marah. He recognised to the full the bitter degradation of his position, and, flinging himself into his chair, he buried his face in his hands, while the tears of remorse and despair trickled through his fingers. How miserably had he failed in his duty as a chosen minister of the Word! He had disgraced the cloth, and forfeited, not only the respect of others, but his own, by engaging in a brutal fight. How low he had fallen from that high standard of moral courage and Christian courtesy he had set himself to maintain! True, his first actions were excusable on the ground of self-defence, but how easily the Tempter had prevailed upon him to turn aggressor! It was degrading, humiliating, mortifying! Oh the wickedness and the folly of it all! He had defiled his sacred office, and the finger of scorn would be pointed at him; and—*he had half-killed Cynthia's father!* Instead of healing it, he had widened the breach between himself and Blaine—most probably transformed it into an unbridgable gulf. His cup of bitterness was indeed full to overflowing.

Blaine gradually collected his scattered wits, and, sitting up on the floor, rubbed his eyes as one awakening from a wondrous dream. As he did so, his gaze rested on a charming picture of rare, ripe, feminine loveliness framed in the doorway communicating with the inner apartment, and he rubbed his eyes harder than ever.

'Pa!'

'Cynthy!' he ejaculated, staggering to his feet, and the next instant the girl was laughing and sobbing hysterically in her father's arms.

'Say, Cynthy,' began Blaine, not unkindly, when the first shock of surprise was over, 'I calkerlate your beau hez jest guv me the warmest welcome I ever hed.'

'Beau, pa!' exclaimed the girl, hiding her crimson blushes on his breast; 'Everard isn't my beau; he's my—*my husband!*'

'Seven-up' Blaine dropped into a chair as if he had been shot, and out came the crimson bandana once more.

'Wal! ef this-yer ain't a camp-meetin' an' a circus, with a dog-fight chucked in!' he gasped, plying the handkerchief vigorously.

'Oh, it's all my fault, pa—every tiny, little bit of it! I *did* want to give you a *real* surprise?'

'You hev, Cynthy—you hev. Between the two of you, I reckon you've guv me the all-firedest, whoppin'est *sur*prise in tarnation!'

'You see, pa, this is how it was. Everard wanted to write or wire you for your consent to our engagement, but I wouldn't hear of such a thing. So I planned a little surprise party for you. Mrs Selborne was to chaperon me, and we were all three to travel to New Denver together. Then Mrs Selborne was suddenly taken ill, which upset all our plans. A single young lady couldn't travel alone with a young man, you know—not even a minister, and I wouldn't let Everard write and spoil the fun for anything, so I just made him marry me right away—*made him*, pa—and bring me along for the parental blessing. At first he refused until he had got your sanction—made all sorts of stupid excuses, but I coaxed him into it at last. I positively did, pa! Ain't you ashamed of your daughter? You see, he didn't know you'——

'No, I guess you air 'bout c'reck thar, Cynthy.'

'But *I* did. *I* knew that you never denied me anything, that you had confidence in me not to make a fool of myself by doing anything rash, and that it would be all right. Besides, we *should* have got married in any case; we love each other so. We were coming right through to New Denver yesterday, only when we got to Fortyfoot here, I was too tired to go another mile; so we just stopped here for a day's rest, and should have come on by the stage to-morrow. We met Phil on the stage, and though I was wearing a thick veil he recognised me, and we had to take him into our confidence before he would promise not to tell you I was here.'

Before Cynthia could proceed any further, Blaine rose from his seat and walked over to the minister. There was no shade of malice in his eye, no revengeful frown upon his honest face—nothing but a look of the profoundest admiration—as he held out his open hand, and said deliberately:

'Young feller, put it thar! Shake!'

Hingston raised his head in wonderment, and laid his white hand in the other's brown palm.

'Ev'rard Hingston,' Blaine said proudly, shaking his hand long and heartily while he spoke alternately in bursts of admiration to each of the young couple, 'you air the rattiest, bulliest parson I ever come across!—Lor, Cynthy! a Arizona mule ain't in it when yer husband lets out with his knuckles! The man who can lam Ed'ard Wilkerson Blaine till he don't know hisself from a three-year-old corpse is the man I'd jest admire to hev fur a son-in-law! Gosh, Cynthy gal! he jest tooted his horn an' went in on the shoulder an' convarted me inside of three minutes! Most powerful exhorter I ever come across! I'd jest been hevin' the almightiest wrastlin' with the sperrit when you kem in you ever heearn tell on!—You air a Hingston, but you air white. I don't keer a continental wot chips you hev or you hevn't, fur I do 'low you kin lick any four greasers in Arizona State, an' thet's the galoot to take keer o' *my* darter! Put it thar! Shake! You jest come right along to New Denver, an' we'll fix you up the bulliest, bang-up gospel-shop between Los Angeles an' Saint Louis; an' Ed'ard Wilkerson Blaine 'll be head deacon to han' round the sasser in a biled shirt—durned ef I won't!'

And he was, too.

THE WATER-GATE OF THE TRANSVAAL.

No commercial event of modern times has so strongly stirred the people of South Africa as the recent opening of the railway from Delagoa Bay to Pretoria, the capital of the South African Republic, better known as the Transvaal. The President of that rising state had set his heart on finding to the sea a way that should be free from English influence, and removed from the fear of English control. No means of securing an entirely independent port on the eastern seaboard existed, and the only possible alternative was to employ the Portuguese port of Lourenço Marques as the desired haven of the Transvaal State.

The making of the railway line was attended with serious difficulties. Southern Africa is, roughly speaking, an inland plateau, with an average height of four thousand feet above the sea. On the western side this plateau rises from the Atlantic in a long and regular slope; on the eastern it springs abruptly from the fringe of low coast-lands which lie between its base and the sea. To cross this coast strip, the native home of the dreaded fever, to trace a path through the rugged and bush-clad spurs which spring multitudinous from the foot of the plateau, to climb the perpendicular face of the tableland itself—these were the problems which confronted the first engineers who essayed the perilous task. Their attempts were at first unsuccessful: after a short section of the line had been completed, political and financial hindrances brought the work to a standstill, and the Delagoa Bay line came to be regarded in South Africa as an impracticable and harebrained scheme.

But with the development of the Transvaal Gold-fields, and the immense access of wealth which thereupon found its way into the treasury of the Republic, the idea, shortly before consigned to the limbo of things impossible, was revived. A new company, formed in the Netherlands, took up the abandoned task: one engineering difficulty after the other was overcome; unexampled energy was shown in the construction of the line, and the connection between the capital and the port was made in November of last year, though the formal opening for traffic only took place in July 1895, and was celebrated with exuberant joy by the government at Pretoria.

Whether any sufficient basis for the somewhat effusive self-gratulation of the Transvaal authorities exist or not, the future only can reveal. At present the fact remains, however persistently it may be ignored, that the Republic is still an entirely inland state, and that complications with Portugal, or a European disturbance, may at any moment deprive the Transvaal of her outlet on the Indian Ocean, and compel her to enter the South African family circle, from which she still holds selfishly aloof. It is at least certain that the new line is an important factor in modern South African politics, and is bound to exercise a great influence on the channels of trade. The harbour of Lourenço Marques is, without exception, the safest and most commodious in Africa south of the equator; and the distance from the port to the great gold-mining centres of the Transvaal is less by some hundreds of miles than that from the nearest seaports of Cape Colony or Natal. When it is further remembered that the line runs through immense, and as yet undeveloped, coal-fields, it needs no remarkable perspicuity to discover in which direction the current of trade will be deflected. It may be that a glimpse of the railway route, and the country which it traverses, may give a clearer understanding of the magnitude of the work, and the importance of the results that are likely to follow its completion.

The through train for Delagoa Bay leaves Pretoria once a day. The ironclad cars of the Netherlands Company present a curious, scarcely inviting appearance to the English eye. As a rule they are kept scrupulously clean, but do not err on the side of excessive comfort to the traveller, who may not improbably find the company of the Transvaal Boer more obtrusive than entertaining. The manners of the Boer are painfully primitive: his habits are not of the cleanliest; the fumes of his rank tobacco (and he smokes day and night without ceasing) are objectionably strong. It is curious to observe the contrasts of his character. He studies his Bible with a superstitious reverence, yet he is cunning and shifty to a degree; the Englishman, and especially the trader, is to him an Amalekite, whom it is right and lawful to deceive. Ignorant and curious as a child, the Boer unites with a simplicity almost infantile an air of confidence which is astonishing: it is the air of those who will tell you that they beat the English at Majuba, and are henceforth the masters of the world.

For more than a hundred miles after leaving Pretoria, the train runs due eastward through open rolling plains, called by the Dutch the Highveld. The scenery is monotonous in the extreme; the climate, cool in summer and sharply cold in winter, is second to none in the world. These vast spaces of land and sky, each almost equally devoid of life, at first repel, then attract, the visitor with a magic of their own. It is a fascination quite different from that of the brilliant, crowded East, drawing men by the sensuous charm of its variegated beauty; but it is as effective and as real. Rarely indeed does the South African colonist, however successful, return to dwell beneath the leaden skies of the north.

The dull appearance of the country is deceptive. The traveller regards it as uninteresting and commonplace; in reality, these endless kopjes and treeless downs conceal beneath their bold exterior immense stores of mineral wealth. Around the rising town of Middelburg, a hundred miles from Pretoria, coal-mines are being opened in a score of places at once: every farm for many miles around is being searched for gold; cobalt is found hard by; great fields of magnetic iron stretch through the hilly country which rises to the north and east. Of these minerals the coal is most easily obtained and at present the most valuable. It is used by the railway, and by the mines at Witwatersrandt: it lies ready to hand in the future development of the iron-fields; and a colossal company has been formed to supply the ocean-steamers which call at Delagoa Bay.

Leaving Middelburg, the line rises steadily through the same unattractive mineral country to Machadodorp, six thousand feet above sea-level. Here, amid scenery which recalls the wild moorlands of Yorkshire and the Westmorland fells, the train begins to descend in steep curves, following the course of a small river, till the edge of the precipice which forms the eastern wall of the plateau is reached. The ordinary metals are now supplemented by a cogged rail, a special engine with toothed wheels is attached, and the cars, clanking and groaning, begin the perilous descent into the tunnel which leads to the valley below. A few moments of darkness, and the traveller emerges into daylight again, still on the same steep incline. But the change that meets his view is wonderful. The eye rested, ere vision was lost in the gloom of the tunnel, on a wild and barren prospect—the foaming river, naked precipices rising sheer into most transparent air, desolate hillsides strewn with boulders and shingle. Emerging, it is to find one's self gliding obliquely down the mountain-side, amid hills clothed to the summit with forest trees and bush and waving grass; below, a smiling valley stretches far as the eye can see, guarded by hills which rise steeply on every side, as though 'to sentinel enchanted land.'

Half the day the train rushes through the valley, by the side of the hurrying stream, whose clear green waters foam white over reefs and rocks in every bend. Now the rail climbs painfully the steep hillside; now it winds through level meadow-land and over leagues of swamp, where the grass, rank and long, barely conceals the pestilential soil below. Fantastic peaks of unscaled rock peer down upon the track; wooded bluffs and steep cliff-faces, strangely coloured with brown and red, alternate with rolling slopes of yellow grass, above which strange cacti rise erect, grotesque with crowning blossoms of orange and vermilion. Over the whole silent, sun-bathed scene the glamour of El Dorado lies, and the shadow of Death! For gold is hidden in yon gray hills and dim ravines—treasure guarded by dragon more deadly than watched the golden fruit of Hesperides. Fever broods in kloof and forest almost the whole year through, and the enchanting valley through which the railway runs is one huge graveyard, where the hidden and nameless graves of hundreds of victims lie for ever unknown. On the railway construction they perished in crowds: of those unhappy ones who struck into the untrodden hills, and found, not gold, but Death, Heaven only knows the tale.

The finest scenery along the route is met with at Krokodil Poort, where the valley narrows to a gorge, through which the Crocodile River pours its emerald waters in a foaming and resistless stream. It is

A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath the waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon lover.

Above the narrow ravine gray rock-walls tower for hundreds of feet, inaccessible, half-naked precipices showing ghastly through their thin covering of dry and stunted bush. The contrast between the soaring, silent peaks above, and the chafing river below, strikes one keenly: the sense of solitude is almost painful, and is heightened by the hard tones and shining spaces of the midday sky. It is a relief to be out of the gorge and into the bush-clothed plain. Here the trees are of every size and sort, scanty of foliage and bare-limbed. Here and there ghastly 'fever trees' are conspicuous; leprous-looking objects with shimmering crowns of light-green leaves and naked trunks of sulphur-yellow hue. Where these are found, fever is said to be especially deadly.

Crossing the Portuguese frontier, the rail runs for many miles parallel with the broad stream of the Komati River, and then plunges into the dense primeval forest which fringes the coast. Here the sickly and penetrating smell of the malarial swamp is first noticed, and as dusk draws on, a white mist rises from the ground to a height of three or four feet. In the winter months, it is said, the country is fairly healthy: in summer it is a veritable fever den; no one escapes its attack, no one hopes to. Only in extreme or neglected cases does the disease prove fatal; but the suffering is severe, and the patient is liable to annually recurring attacks for the rest of his days, especially on removing to cooler lands.

The port of Lourenço Marques takes its name from a Portuguese trader who established himself at Delagoa Bay about the year 1625. The town is built on the low-lying land on the left bank of English River, two miles above its debouchment into the bay. The site is ill chosen: patches of unreclaimed swamp are still to be seen on the very borders of the town, which has gradually grown over the fetid and pestiferous marsh in which it was originally planted. Lourenço and his followers were of more stubborn mould than their descendants of to-day: nineteenth-century flesh and blood finds the stench of the undrained swamp intolerable—not to be endured by living creature with the most rudimentary sense of smell. How anybody could choose to live in the midst of the fetid horror, and, still more, to raise a town on its inky, deadly mud, is incomprehensible.

The present town of Lourenço Marques is cleanly enough to the outside view. The narrow streets are straight and level, often shaded by broad-leaved trees and bordered by flat-roofed, low houses, with walls of stucco painted by order of the Camara Municipal, most paternal of civic powers. The owners, however, are free to exercise their own tastes in the way of colour; hence the vistas of the narrow streets present a not unpleasing variety of tints, blue and orange, chocolate and yellow, pink and green. The latter has a startling effect, but is evidently regarded as being in perfect harmony in a country where the very telegraph poles are coloured in a delicate pink shade. The appearance of these gaily ornamented symbols of civilisation as they rise above the reeds of a fever-ridden swamp, or struggle upwards through the tangled bush, has in it somewhat, to say the least, of the incongruous. But incongruity is natural in Portuguese provinces over sea.

The unfortunate selection of the swamp for the site of the town seems inexplicable when it is found that high land rises a quarter of a mile from the river-bank, and stretches far inland. This higher ground, thickly wooded, and covered with short lawn-like grass, is composed of sand, the drift of untold centuries from the bay. The roads in this part of Lourenço Marques are for the most part sandy tracks, where the pedestrian moves with difficulty, the carriage and the jinriksha not at all; but the government is now constructing good and well-metalled roads to replace these natural paths. Numerous villas have been built in this quarter; tasteful gardens alternate with picturesque copses and patches of native bush. Landward, the eye ranges over a boundless expanse of open park-like country, seaward over the sparkling waters of the bay; while the huddled town at the foot of the heights, the spacious river and the shipping, fill up the nearer view. Seen from this point, the natural advantages of Lourenço Marques are apparent to the most casual observation. It possesses a harbour unrivalled on the continent south of the equator. Delagoa Bay itself is almost landlocked, and sheltered from every breeze that blows except gales from the east, which seldom occur: three navigable rivers flow into it from north, west, and south, while its great expanse is ample enough to afford anchorage for the entire British fleet. English River, on which stands the town, is a mile in width where it enters the bay, and has a depth of water which enables war-ships to anchor within a stone's-throw of the jetty, and ocean-steamers of the largest class to discharge their cargoes directly on the wharves. But these advantages are nullified, to a great extent, by the apathy and incapacity of the Portuguese, who have shown themselves unable to cope with the growing influx of trade. The delays which occur in forwarding are so vexatious that merchants in the Transvaal still prefer the costlier and longer, but more expeditious route through Cape Colony and Natal. In the hands of its present owners Delagoa Bay is a useless and expensive possession, and the obvious advantages of the new railway are to a great extent lost. But if held by a progressive power, Lourenço Marques would develop at once into a first-class port, an invaluable coaling station, and a strategic naval base of the greatest importance. The Power that holds Delagoa Bay will dominate the coast from Cape Point to Guardafui, besides holding the key to the internal trade of the wealthiest part of South Africa. To whom will it fall? The question is one which is daily debated throughout the length and breadth of the South African States, to all of which the question is one of vital interest. It cannot long remain in the feeble hands which hold it now, whose pretence of power is a mockery and a byword even among the native hordes they are supposed to control.

A STORY IN EMBROIDERY.

By H. Murray Gilchrist.

Old Jason Eyre was dead, and the furniture of East Lees Hall was to be sold. Since childhood I had been filled with a strong desire to pass through its ancient rooms, where was scarce a single article that had been acquired within the present century; so, on the very first opportunity of inspecting the place, I walked across the low-lying moor and through the beech copse to the terrace garden. There was only an ancient housekeeper left in charge: she was sitting on the lowest of the semicircular stairs, polishing a pewter venison dish. A few tame pigeons fluttered about her feet. Jason had left her a small annuity; after the sale, she was to occupy a cottage in the village. She rose and curtsied in the antiquated fashion. I had met her one afternoon some months before on the moor, where it had been my privilege to disembarrass her from the attentions of a bemused tramp who had followed her from the hill-gate. I told her why I had come, and she unlocked the great door.

'If so be ye care to go through by yersel,' she said. 'I dunna mind trustin' ye. Not as

I'd let onybody go, though; but my rheumatics is that bad, an' it's a' up-stairs an' down-stairs.'

So I entered the Hall, which was hung with Flemish tapestry, grotesquely illustrative of the discovery of America. On either side rose a narrow staircase, with spiral oaken balustrades that ended in a gallery. A few pieces of armour stood on pedestals; the huge open hearth was full of the litter of a daw's nest that had tumbled down the chimney. I determined to examine the chambers first; and ascending the stairs, passed from one place to another, and found all furnished alike. There were four-post bedsteads hung with silk damasks, quaint dressing-stands with services of egg-shell porcelain, mats of woven rushes faded to a dull green, mirrors that swung from standards so slender that one feared lest the movement of the heavy glass should snap them asunder.

In a garret stood all kinds of lumber—a broken chamber organ of painted wood, spinning-wheels, rushlight holders, and a pile of canvas hatchments with corners eaten away by the rats. From this place a turnpike staircase wound upwards to a campanile that opened on the leads, whence could be seen an exquisite view of the whole valley, with its scattered hamlets and bright-hued woods, and slow, shallow river. When I had rested there awhile, I went again to the chambers, and finding a side staircase that opened to an anteroom, I descended, and turning the handle of the door at the foot, entered the summer parlour. There was a strange, sweet savour there—an admixture of the perfumes of sandal-wood and cedar and rose-leaves and lavender. It came from the blue bowls that lay on the tables: when I plunged my hand into one, a filmy dust rose and floated up to the pargeted ceiling. It was a room in which you expected a lady in a hoop to step forward with a courteous speech, or a gentleman to offer his enamelled snuff-box. The colouring was warm and subdued, with a delicacy of suggestion that could be found in no modern place: it reminded one somehow of a dainty old French picture.

When I had admired the fine panelling of the walls and the subtle curves of the furniture, my eyes fell on a curious embroidery frame that stood in a corner. Its supports were made of brass, moulded into the shape of the booted leg which is the crest of the Eyre family, and the space usually occupied by the web was empty, save for a tightly rolled piece at the left side. A silver chain was twisted round this; I unfastened it, and found that the needlework, which unrolled as a blind unrolls, was joined again and again, and fully six yards long. It was wrought on a pale, shining silk. Time had yellowed the outermost part, but the remainder was almost as bright as when it left the loom. The colours of the little pictures were fresh and vivid, each represented a scene in the history of some woman, and beneath each I found embroidered in scarlet thread a short explanation. I drew the frame nearer the window, and in the waning sunlight began to read.

The innermost picture represented a child sitting at the feet of an old man, who played on an instrument not unlike a lute. The work here was very crude, but there was a certain pleasing vigour in the postures. The inscription read: 'Candlemas Day, Anno Domini 1732. I, Diana Eyre, at my mother's wish, have wrought this with my needle. It hath occupied a month, and ever while I have stitched, my grandfather Eyre hath played upon his viol-di-gamba to give me pleasure.—Lord grant me wisdom to direct my ways.'

The next illustration, which was worked below this, showed two girls in a French garden, amidst tall fluted columns and terminal statues (done in silver thread), whence swung from one to another fruitless vines. Beyond the balustrade on which they leaned grew dwarf rose-trees, with flowers vastly disproportionate. Diana's art had progressed; the faces were dainty and charming. 'I was fearful that my success would be small in depicting the loveliness of my most dear friend, Anna Darrandwater; yet, since she is content, 'tis not for me to complain. She had a fairer skin than I: indeed, she is the paragon.' This little idyl of friendship came to naught, for there was no further mention of Anna.

The following picture showed amidst an indistinct crowd of dancers a youth and a girl swaying in the cotillion. Both were masked. She wore a robe of pearl and green; he, a suit of azure embellished with rich laces, in the imitation of which Diana's fancy had excelled. It was possible even to see the doublings of the folds about his wrists. Something in the girl's figure—the same delicate yet vigorous individuality told that it was Diana herself, although the inscription was misleading: 'Old Christmas Day, 1735. This treateth of the escapade of Perilla, who danced fifteen times with one Aristippus at my lady Gantry's masque. Note the divine grace of the youth, the modest ingenuousness of the maid.'

After this was an illustration of a young man, riding on a sorrel horse beside a portly Squire, whose face was preternaturally severe. The brush of a fox was just disappearing in a distant wood; some wearied hounds panted almost within reach. The lover's countenance was singularly handsome, but touched with an expression of hopelessness. 'Thus asked a man for a maid of the lovingest sire in the country. But, alas! he hath a lesser fortune, and the sire will not heed. Yet, dearest one, be not afraid. Wait for her, and she will wait for thee. If love be love of any worth, 'tis lasting.'

Then followed a most charming picture of a coppice in moonlight. It was all wrought in russet and bright gray; and there was no other colour—not even in the faces of the lovers. They were walking hand in hand along a broad glade, at whose end rose a thin, wavering fountain. One could almost hear whispers and the plashings of water. In the nethermost tree a great owl blinked. To the left was a vista, which discovered part of the terrace of East Lees Hall, and the oriel of the summer parlour. The fabric glistened so that the figures seemed to move—surely they had passed farther down the glade! The inscription ran thus: 'The lover and the maid, half despairing of moving the decision of the proud father, meet by stealth thus, and babble like children. Oh, 'tis exquisite to love, but to a maid who loves 'tis verily more exquisite to be loved! They have vowed to let naught come atween them—if need be, to endure till death.'

A little vignette, very spitefully worked, came next. The scene was this same summer parlour, and the girl sat at a small table with her hands clasped, and her face turned away from an elderly suitor who knelt at her feet. His figure was uncouth; his face atrociously ugly, with a bottle-nose and wide-opened lips that showed overlapping teeth and rugged gums. His ears protruded, and his forehead was seamed with wrinkles. Despite its exaggerations, the caricature was not devoid of merit; one could soften its most grotesque features, and see there the commonplace country gentleman. Around it ran the legend: 'Melibœus came a-courting. He hath a fine estate, with two hundred head of deer, a house like a king's palace, so much money that he knows not the amount. Moreover, he hath been wed twice—scarce a year hath passed since his last lady was embalmed. The honour of his hand, the mistress-ship of his mansion, and the possession of all the heirlooms, he offered to the maid; but she refused firmly, and thereby well-nigh broke her father's heart. The lover is away in the South country, striving to make profitable a dilapidated estate which a great-aunt hath bequeathed. He hath sent her for love-tokens such gifts as farm-lads give their wenches—breast-knots of red and blue and white—a silver pin and a paste-brooch. 'Twas her wish that his gifts should be thus plain, for she divined that otherwise he would outspend his fortune.'

There was another spiteful piece. The youth was standing in the street of a spa, bowing amorously to a scanty-fleshed dowager in a sedan, whose shrivelled fingers wafted a kiss. The lover was still comely as ever; but the lady's aspect was abominable as a nightmare. Evidently Diana had felt the pangs of jealousy, for the first part of the writing was full of rancour: 'Thus do men disport themselves when away from those whom they profess to love. See the face of madam! 'Tis indeed no libel. The maid's aunt wrote the whole story from Bath. Madam, spite of her plainness, is well endowed: a fortune of two hundred thousand pounds and a plantation in Barbadoes being hers.' The tone mollified suddenly. 'The lover wrote yestermorn, making light of the story. He loves none but the maid. Out upon all tattlers!'

The next scene was of most lugubrious import. It was done entirely in black silk, and at first the purport was hard to understand. There was a steep cliff, at whose foot (separated from the rock only by a narrow strip of sand) flowed a tempestuous sea, whereon swayed a monstrous boat. On this tiny beach the lover was struggling with three sailors. Despair was imprinted on his face—the despair of a man who is losing all his happiness at one blow. Beyond the furthermost wave the sails of a man-of-war were visible. Diana's lettering was broken and rough. 'July, the first day, 1737. This last month hath been all darkness to the maid. Her true lover, walking by night on the shore of the Channel, perchance pondering upon her he loved, is seized by the press-gang and carried out to the king's ship, *The Royal Pennon*. He hath not yet been able to write; each day is she saddened more and more. She doubts if she can live.'

A wreck was worked after this—the breaking-up of an impossible ship on waves so high and perilous as made it miraculous that the timbers had not collapsed long since. The sea was full of leviathans—sharks with jaws big enough to swallow an elephant, crabs like turtles, eels fully a quarter of a mile in length. Here and there men were disappearing; but Diana's courage had failed, and she had not dared to depict her lover's face. 'Terror hath filled the world. News is brought of the loss of the ship. Farewell for ever, hope and joy.'

A full yard of the silk was covered with funeral wreaths and moths and sad flowers. Diana had lost for the while all desire of depicting any part of her life. At last a flight of lich-fowl—ravens, owls, hawks, and the like—hovered above a corpse that lay on a deserted strand. Underneath were the words, 'Love's Obsequies.'

She had grown more bitter; there was a vein of cynical humour in the next illustration. A suite of country swains of all ages, each with his bags of gold and his attendant spaniels, paid court to a woman whose face was shrouded in a loose square of gray silk. I lifted this patch, and discovered that it hid a realistic death's-head! A collection of ghosts followed; they were labelled appropriately with such names as 'Youth's Hope,' 'A Lost Woman's Fancy,' 'The Incubus.'

But when these were passed, I saw the lover clad in palm-leaves and skins, and struggling through a primeval forest where apes gambolled. All Diana's power had returned, and her work was so full of spirit that it was hard to believe she had never beheld this strange country. 'A dream the maid dreamed long afterwards told her that the lover was not drowned, but had reached the shore, and, companionless, sought shelter in the wild forest. Perchance he is not dead. Hope hath been born again within her breast. He is surely dwelling amidst some savage tribe, and praying night and morn for the day of reunion. Until her death the maid will wait, yea, and, if God permit, she will be his through eternity.'

After this came the prettiest of Diana's labours—a copy of a letter, done in golden hair: 'MY SWEET MISTRESS—If Providence favour me so that this, the first word I write in a civilised place, fall into thy hands, thou wilt know that we are destined for each other. That I was pressed for *The Royal Pennon* thou most certainly have heard. Thou lovedst me; I vow that this knowledge hath kept my soul from sinking under terrible tribulations—and thou art still constant. Amongst the Indians, by whom 'twas my fortune to be entertained, thy vision ever fluttered before me—from dayspring to sunset, sunset to dayspring thou wert with thy poor lover. And now, 'tis within a measurable length of time that we may meet. Each hour, nay, each minute till then seems a year.'

There was a prim study of the lover standing on the quay of a New England town. Rows of many-storeyed houses faced the river; an odd assemblage of negroes and of white folk in the garb of Quakers moved to and fro. A schooner was just ready to sail. 'The lover is coming; the maid at home is amazed with happiness. The gods have blessed him; in his absence he hath heired land and much gold. Even the maid's sire holds him as worthy, and now there is naught in store but peace and gladness. He is coming—he may be here even to-morrow. Oh Heaven, the maid gives thanks to thee that she had strength to live.'

The summer parlour appeared again, with the lovers sitting together on a settle. They were holding each other's hands and gazing into space, far too happy for speech. The Squire had peeped in through a half-open door; only his forehead was visible. 'The maid's father hath oft twitted her upon her meditations. He peered in again and again at the lovers, being desirous of hearing the traveller's wonderful adventures; but ever found them silent, and so at last retired. It is all agreed; in a month the maid is wed and taken to her husband's home in the High-Peak country. The sire entreateth that the story of the courting may be left for a token. 'Twill be hard to part with her sampler, but she may oft ride over on the new white mare, and peruse her work, laughing over its mirth, and weeping glad tears over its mournfulness. But ere 'tis done there is one symbol must be shown.'

It was the last piece—a wedding ring with the posy, 'One Life, one Love.'

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

One of the first newspapers which gave its readers woodcuts in illustration of the text was the *Observer*, and in that paper appeared in the year 1827 a picture of Mr Gurney's new steam-carriage as it appeared in the Regent's Park on Thursday, December 6, of that year. This picture is interesting now that the adoption of mechanical carriages on common roads is so near realisation. But steam is not likely to make much headway against the more modern petroleum engine, which works without any visible outrush of vapour, which has no red-hot cinders to distribute on the road, and which has so many other advantages—that of cheap working not the least. Those who have had an opportunity of travelling in petroleum-driven vehicles tell us that the only drawback is the vibration, and the throbbing of the engine, which works whether the vehicle is moving or stationary. This fault will no doubt be remedied, for the new means of locomotion is attracting the attention of engineers, and improvements will follow as a matter of course. As a stimulus to such improvement, a leading London paper, *The Engineer*, is offering a prize of one thousand pounds for the best designs for horseless vehicles; and an American paper makes the same announcement.

There is an interesting article in a recent number of the *Kew Bulletin* on the Vanilla of commerce, so much used as a delicate flavouring for confectionery. It is curious to read that it was employed by the Aztecs of Mexico as an ingredient in the manufacture of chocolate, prior to the discovery of America by the Spaniards, and that it was brought to Europe as a perfume, with indigo, cochineal, and cacao ten years before the arrival of tobacco on our shores. The name Vanilla is derived from the Spanish *vaina*, a pod or capsule. Dampier described it as a little cod full of small black seeds, and like the stem of a tobacco leaf. So much so that his men, when they found the dried pods at first, threw them away, 'wondering why the Spaniards should lay up tobacco stems.' Those who desire more information on the subject should refer to an exhaustive paper 'On the production of Vanilla in Europe,' which was read by Professor Morren before the British Association at Newcastle in 1838.

The evolutionary text or maxim, 'No cats, no clover,' has hardly yet passed into the general consciousness. The truth involved in this somewhat mysterious adage is illustrated by a short but interesting paragraph in a recent number of *Notes and Queries*. A contributor was surprised to learn that in a Buckinghamshire parish a new industry had been created some years ago: humble-bees were systematically bought at fourpence a head, and were as systematically collected for sale. On inquiry, it was found that the humble-bees were wanted for export (or transport) to New Zealand. And why? To help to fertilise red clover, which it had in vain been attempted to grow there.

For according to one universally recognised outcome of the Darwinian theory, many English flowers are capable of being fertilised by help of but one kind of insect. Thus common red clover is fertilised by the visits of the humble-bee, whose long proboscis reaches the honey contained at the end of the narrow tube formed by the fused petals of the plant. The hive-bee cannot perform the same service to clover, as its proboscis is too short. For the same reason the native bees of New Zealand failed to fertilise any of the red clover sown there; and so red clover could not be grown in that important colony, though clover was much in demand for New Zealand cattle and sheep. Hence the demand for English humble-bees, which cheerfully entered on their duties when transported to the southern seas.

If the connection between cats and clover is not yet plain, it will 'spring into the eyes' when it is added that various kinds of mice are the worst enemy of the humble-bee. Hence, in the Darwinian 'House that Jack built,' the cat kills the mice that kill the humble-bees that feed on clover ; and if there are too few cats, there are apt to be too many mice and not nearly enough of humble-bees for their important but not always gratefully acknowledged functions.

When the annual close time for salmon commences, which is instituted for the purpose of allowing the fish unmolested access to their spawning-grounds, the poacher comes upon the scene, and for his selfish ends does his best to defeat laws which are framed for the general good of all. The last report of the Inspectors of Fisheries shows that in 1894, five hundred and thirty-three prosecutions were instituted for illegal capture of salmon in various English and Welsh districts, and that convictions were obtained in four-fifths of the cases. It will be therefore seen that the poachers have not all their own way. In Ireland and Scotland, also, a number of convictions were obtained during the same period, but it is known that the number of detections bears a very small proportion to the number of poachers engaged in a very mischievous trade. For it is a trade, and one which could not flourish if there were not unscrupulous dealers to act in collusion with the poachers. These dealers adopt, it is said, such artifices as labelling the poached fish 'Foreign Salmon,' 'Canadian Salmon,' &c., and it is on these men that the chief punishment should fall. A plentiful and cheap supply of salmon would be an immense boon to the country, and this would be best brought about by thorough protection of the fish during the breeding season.

Dr Cook, an American explorer who was a member of the first Peary Expedition, has recently sailed on a voyage of research to Antarctic Seas. His ships are two small sailing-vessels of only one hundred tons each, and the entire party consists of sixteen members, six of whom are scientific men. The expedition is intended to reach, if possible, Erebus and Terror Gulf—seven hundred miles south of Cape Horn, and to disembark there. But should the ice permit, the voyagers will go still farther south, as far indeed as they can, although there is no idea of reaching the pole. When the party land, a wooden storehouse will be built as a base of operations, and if no safe shelter can be found for the two vessels, they will be sent northward to the Falkland Islands, with orders to return when summer comes round once more. In the meantime, during the autumn and winter, the party on shore will occupy themselves in scientific research.

One of the most remarkable features of the great Trans-Siberian Railway is one which, so far as we know, has not been tried or even called for elsewhere, not even by devout Americans, though all merely bodily wants are zealously catered for on the trans-continental lines. The Government of Holy Russia is reported to have arranged for church-carriages in the trains, with free provision for all the elements of a decorous and impressive religious service. A pope or priest—as it were, a guard or conductor of souls—will also, accordingly, be attached to the trains making the long through journey from the shores of the Baltic to the Amur country on the North Pacific.

The glass used in the manufacture of lenses of all kinds is called Optical Glass, a material which is heavier, whiter, and far more refractive than the material used for common purposes. Up to within recent years the varieties of glass at the disposal of our opticians have been about half a dozen in number, but now, thanks in great measure to German enterprise and research, the list has been considerably increased. New descriptions of glass have made it possible to construct lenses possessing properties which formerly would have been deemed quite beyond achievement, and the most marked improvement has been seen in lenses intended for photographic purposes. One of the most recent of these is known as the 'Cooke' lens, and is manufactured by Messrs Taylor, Taylor, & Hobson of Leicester. Photographers will understand its value when it is stated that, with full aperture, fine definition is secured up to the edges of the plate. It will be of very great service for hand-camera work.

Canada is notoriously a rich land, possessing in its fertile soil, its forests, its animals, its fisheries, and its mines, inexhaustible stores of wealth. Its agricultural and dairy production is enormous. It is known to export coal, gold, copper, iron, antimony, phosphates, salt, and gypsum ; but it has not generally been credited with stores of excellent pearls. This would, however, seem to be the case : the *Canadian Gazette*, as quoted in the *Board of Trade Journal* for October last, affirms that the rivers of Quebec province, especially the tributaries of the St Lawrence below Quebec city, 'teem with pearl-bearing shells. Fine stones are very rare, though some are occasionally found of the right colour as large as a good-sized pea, and perfectly round ; but the less valuable kinds are very numerous.'

Dr Impey, who is the medical superintendent of the South African Leper Establishment at Robben Island, believes that he has discovered a cure for that horrible disease in its earlier stages, and in order to prosecute inquiries, he is now visiting the various leper stations in Norway, Russia, &c. His treatment consists in exterminating one poison by the introduction of another, and is based on an observation that acute inflammation of the skin in the case of those suffering from the tuberculous form of leprosy had a marked beneficial result. He finds that tuberculous lepers generally live about eight years ; but if they are attacked by smallpox, measles, erysipelas, or some other inflammatory infection, they are either cured of their leprosy or the disease is modified, the life of the patient being prolonged. He suggests, therefore, that the parts affected with leprosy should be infected, by operation, with erysipelas ; but he admits that success could only be hoped for in cases where the leprosy was only a year or two old. When the internal organs are attacked, nothing can be done. Dr Impey has devoted the whole of his life to the study of leprosy, and it may be hoped that his present researches will result in some relief to the most pitiable of human beings.

A German scholar has recently published his method of learning foreign languages, and as he has succeeded by his own unaided efforts in learning English, and has also acquired a fair knowledge of French and Spanish, his remarks are certainly worth attention. He commenced by becoming a constant reader of one of the daily papers, at first confining his attention to telegrams emanating from German sources, in which occurred subjects which were familiar to him, and gradually extending his survey of the paper, often having to read a passage twice or thrice before he got at the real meaning. At last he found that he could read English as easily as he could his native language. Then, and not till then, did he take up the study of English grammar, which he did with interest. He points out that the method adopted in our public schools is just the reverse of that which he describes as having been so profitable in his own case, and he regards it as a waste of time, and irksome. He disapproves, too, of the method of allowing children to learn through talking with foreign *bonnes*, 'for the conversation carried on in a nursery must of necessity be a very limited one.'

While the population of Iceland is steadily decreasing by emigration to Manitoba and the United States, the island is being colonised from a new quarter. We all know that the famous work on Iceland by Horrebow, quoted by Dr Samuel Johnson, contained the memorable short and significant chapter, 'There are no snakes to be met with throughout the whole island.' The statement might heretofore have been extended to all reptiles, but would, it appears, be no longer true. Two doctors, Danish and German, who have gone to Iceland more than once to study the leprosy which is endemic there, took compassion on the sufferers from another affliction—the field-labourers, tormented beyond endurance, in spite of face-masks and hand-coverings, by solid clouds of midges, which the scientific gentlemen conceived to be able to breed in such incredible quantities largely from want of amphibia and other reptiles—unattractive, it may be, but not useless. On a return visit the Danish doctor started with a company of forty Danish frogs, which all died on the voyage. The German doctor was more fortunate, and safely deposited one hundred frogs, caught near Berlin, in a swamp near Reikiavik, wherein they disappeared with joyful croaking, an object of much novel interest to the resident ducks and other water birds.

Electrically propelled pleasure-boats are now becoming so common on the Thames, that they attract little notice from passers-by, and charging stations for supplying energy to their secondary batteries, or accumulators, are now to be found every half-dozen miles from Richmond to Oxford. The latest contribution to this new method of boat-propulsion is the New-Mayne Electric Rudder Motor. This is a rudder of ordinary construction, which is hinged to a metal framework standing out from the stern of the boat. At its lower part it is fashioned like a fish-torpedo, the body of the torpedo carrying an electric motor which works a propeller at its end. Current is conveyed to the motor from batteries carried under the seats of the boat by means of flexible wires, which at the same time act as rudder lines, for the rudder can be used in the ordinary way, should the electric motor be in action or not. The battery power required is contained in four boxes, each weighing about fifty pounds, and one charge will carry a boat thirty miles approximately. The offices of the syndicate formed for working this invention are at Bridge Street, Westminster.

A Chicago newspaper complains that the custom which prevails of attaching electric wires to the trunks or branches of trees lining the streets has in many cases been found to lead to the destruction of such trees, and that the mischief is most apparent during rainy weather. This points to the inference that the trees die from the effect of the electric current conveyed to them when the leaves are wet, and when they therefore are good conductors of electricity. In some cases the current has been communicated to the tree in consequence of a wire rubbing against the twigs, and thus having its insulating covering removed. It is believed that fresh legislation will be necessary to prevent electric lighting and power companies depending upon trees for the support of their wires.

It may be reasonably said that a public clock which does not keep good time is a mischievous institution, and worse than no clock at all. The authorities of Glasgow having determined that no timepiece in their city should suffer under such a reproach, endeavoured to trace out a means of establishing a number of public clocks which, by the aid of an electric circuit, should synchronise one with another. A suitable system was chosen, and a trial installation has been set up, which, if found to work well, is to be followed by the erection of between two hundred and three hundred electric clocks, which will be placed at the intersection of the principal streets. Many clocks in London and other towns are already connected by electric wire with the principal timekeeper in the country, that at Greenwich Observatory, by which an electric impulse is sent along the wires at stated intervals, and compels the clocks in circuit to keep time; so that there is nothing very new in the idea. Glasgow is, however, showing an example which ought to be followed by every important town and city in the kingdom.

Fresh light is thrown on the Nicaragua Canal scheme by an admirable and exhaustive article in the *Times* from a correspondent who has visited the site of the abandoned Panama Canal, and that of the one it is now proposed to make *viâ* Lake Nicaragua. With regard to the old scheme which came to such a disastrous end, the writer considers that only one-third of the work has been actually accomplished, and that the remaining two-thirds, if feasible, would cost more than forty millions sterling. The difficulties are rocky elevations which require tunnelling; a high summit-level requiring a number of locks, for which there is no adequate water-supply; and torrential streams in the rainy season which altogether defy the skill of the engineers. All these difficulties are absent from the Nicaraguan route, and it is curious that Lesseps did not appreciate this. Lake Nicaragua is more than one hundred and five miles in length, and averages forty miles in breadth, and the writer of the article referred to describes it as the controlling feature of the whole problem. The utilisation of this lake and the San Juan River, which runs from it towards the Atlantic, leaves only about thirty miles of ground to be excavated. The cost of the enterprise is estimated at twenty millions, but the writer prefers, from what he has seen, to place the probable cost at thirty millions.

An interesting antiquarian discovery has recently been made in Stansted Park, near Portsmouth, of what seems to be the remains of a Roman villa. A new road was in progress of formation, and after the workmen had excavated to a depth of two feet, they came upon a tesselated pavement in an admirable state of preservation. The tiles are alternately red and white, and measure two inches square by one inch in thickness. The owner of the place is reluctant to authorise continued exploration, as he fears that further discoveries might result in what is now a quiet rural retreat becoming a show-place for the congregation of holiday-makers.

I WANT YOU.

I WANT you, in the Springtime sweet and tender,
To be with me when earth is thrilled and stirred
With all the gathering mystery of Life—
To watch with me the birth of bud and bird.

I want you, in the full and radiant Summer,
To share with me its opulence, mine own;
In a rose-kingdom there to crown you Queen,
And kneel before you on your flower-throne.

I want you, in the sad and splendid Autumn,
To reap with me its harvests—gold and red;
To watch it light its forest fires, and mourn
Together o'er things beautiful—but dead.

I want you most of all in Winter dreary,
That we together may make warmth and light;
Holding aloft Love's quenchless torch, until
Its flame illumines all the gloom and night.

I want you—Oh! I want you, now and ever!
Had I a *million* tongues, they could but cry,
'I want you.' All the hunger of my life
Speaks in these words. Am I to live or die?

M. HEDDERWICK BROWNE.

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